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New York

Co-Chairperson: El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba ..... (President of the Gabonese Republic)
Co-Chairperson: Mr. Göran Persson ..... (Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Addresses on the occasion of the High-level Plenary Meeting (*continued*)

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of the Principality of Monaco.

Prince Albert (*spoke in French*): It is with emotion and gratitude that I take the floor to address the Assembly today, for I recall the tribute paid by the General Assembly to my father, Prince Rainier III, on the very day of his passing, 6 April 2005. His commitment to multilateralism and his firm belief in the irreplaceable role of the United Nations were rightly evoked. I should like to state that I fully share his values.

My thoughts, sympathy, compassion and friendship go out to the southern states of the United States grieved by the destruction caused by hurricane Katrina, as well as to the families of the victims and all those who have been sorely affected by that natural disaster.

I should like to congratulate President Jan Eliasson, whose election coincides with the centennial anniversary of the birth of his illustrious countryman Dag Hammarskjöld. I express my deep gratitude to President Ping for his exceptional contribution to the reform of our Organization. Lastly, I wish to commend the tireless commitment of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Without their devotion, the outcome document before us, which has my country's support, would not have succeeded in charting the course for the renewal of the United Nations.

Along road lies ahead, however. It is unacceptable that poverty, hunger and disease continue to afflict so many regions of the world, and in particular in Africa. It was for that reason that I wished Monaco to subscribe to the "Declaration on innovative sources of financing for development". In that connection, I reaffirm the commitment of my country to the Millennium Development Goals. In the coming years, we will significantly increase our official development assistance through a very intensive cooperation policy that we are already implementing, either directly through targeted multilateral and bilateral action or alongside the effective non-governmental organizations that we actively support.

Promoting development does not mean sacrificing the environment. Aware as we are of our common responsibilities towards the least developed countries, we should not exacerbate the imbalances of our planet. Let us bear in mind future generations. Since the oceanographic expeditions led a century ago by my forebear, Prince Albert I, Monaco has always been deeply involved in the protection of the oceans and the planet.

Prince Rainier III, my father, supported extensive research in this field and contributed to the

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establishment of protected marine zones in the Mediterranean.

For my part, I have thus requested the start, without further delay, of the procedures to allow Monaco to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and support the conversion of the United Nations Environment Programme into a specialized agency with a broader mandate.

We must also work on implementing the Plan of Action adopted at the Hyogo Conference by strengthening international cooperation to better prevent and reduce risks of natural disasters and to give ourselves an organization and more effective means to make the world a safer place.

Faced with genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, we must adopt the "responsibility to protect" principle as a basis for collective action. I can only endorse the often-expressed sentiment that it is the international community's duty to act to protect people in danger when that responsibility is not assumed by the State concerned or by the regional organization to which it belongs.

The international community must also protect children from odious crimes of which they are the victims, and, in addition to the provisions of existing conventions, I believe it is essential to adopt rules aimed at ensuring that the perpetrators of such crimes do not go unpunished.

I also unequivocally condemn terrorism. It violates all religious and moral principles by purposely attacking helpless human beings and too often, children. Let us combat terrorism and finalize without delay a comprehensive international convention for the prevention and control of terrorism, as we did with respect to the International Convention against Nuclear Terrorism, which I have just signed.

Lastly, let us lay the groundwork for a partnership among civilizations, based on genuine dialogue. This indeed is the wise choice and the only way to settle conflict and defuse the crises that are tearing apart today's societies.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Victor Yushchenko, President of Ukraine.

President Yushchenko (*spoke in Ukrainian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): The anniversary of the United Nations is a celebration of hope for all humanity. The whole history of our unique forum convinces us that peoples of different nations and cultures are able to hear and support each other. Churchill said, "We must make sure that [the United Nations] is ... a true temple of peace ... and not merely a cockpit in a Tower of Babel." I truly believe that we will live up to humanity's expectations.

At this meeting, the international community is establishing new guidelines for the third millennium. The new Ukraine, free and independent, is following this process, along with the whole family of democratic nations. I believe that the efforts and experience of my country will contribute to finding important benchmarks.

I am the son of a soldier who fought in World War II, whose lot it was to see battle, be wounded and experience the horrors of Auschwitz. Millions did not survive. Millions of men and women died. Every Ukrainian family has a living memory of pain and loss. Thanks to its heroic contribution to the victory over Nazism, Ukraine gained the honour and the right to become one of the founders the United Nations. We contributed our aspiration for peace.

We always stand ready to counteract the threat of war everywhere. I hope that Ukrainian peacekeepers under the United Nations flag will once again prove their courage and professionalism. As a representative of a nation which, shoulder to shoulder with free nations, liberated humankind from the Nazi threat, I am convinced that we can liberate humanity from other deadly threats.

In recent days, we honoured the memory of those who died on 11 September. Ukraine is an active participant in the fight against terrorism. We believe that the international community should do everything possible to eradicate the breeding ground of the virus of terror: intolerance, tyranny, poverty and humiliation.

Ukraine has already contributed much to security in the world by giving up its nuclear weapons. We can put nuclear technologies under rigid international control. We must prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Next year will mark the twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. I strongly believe that this will be an important opportunity to grasp the universal

social and cultural extent of the tragedy. It will enable us to join our efforts to deal with the aftermath.

We must prevent crimes against humanity. I speak to you as the representative of a nation that lost ten million lives to deliberately caused famine. At that time, many other countries turned their back on our tragedy. We insist that the international community tell the truth about that crime. Only by doing so can we ensure that tolerance never encourages criminals.

The high ideals of the United Nations have always encouraged people to fight for their independence and freedom. The peaceful victory in Independence Square in Kyiv opened up new opportunities. Our nation put an end to the past and nobody can now turn back. We are determined to create a free market society with an economy that will be integrated into the world economy. We have received a historic opportunity to be a part of United Europe and we have the road map which will bring us closer to Europe.

Ukraine is very conscious of its responsibilities, and once again we would like to reconfirm our commitment to international development as enshrined in the Millennium Declaration. We are ready to provide our support for that achievement, ready to act as partners in all humanitarian, economic and social projects and ready to look for opportunities to consolidate the efforts. I am quite sure that those efforts will expand as United Nations reform goes forward, and the key element will be the reform of the United Nations Security Council. In order to become more active, the composition of the Security Council should reflect the realities of today. It will be fairer if all regions, including Eastern Europe, are represented.

Sixty years ago, Franklin Roosevelt said that we should secure and share our friendship with the world. If this was achieved, we would be able to meet the great goals of humanity. The United Nations has succeeded in establishing the foundation for that. Thus, we can proceed together. We hope that peace, welfare, freedom and justice for every nation will be achieved.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of Equatorial Guinea.

President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo (*spoke in Spanish*): Five years after the Millennium Summit, we have agreed to come together once again, in this global High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to assess the degree of implementation and the results of the measures and strategies that were agreed on in 2000 and at other summits of the United Nations system, with a view to bringing about a more developed and integrated world, safeguarded by collective peace and security and where men and women can live in dignity and enjoy their inalienable rights under the protection of the law.

We have followed — horrified — the terrible damage done by Hurricane Katrina as it crossed the Gulf coast of the United States of America, causing the loss of many lives and harm to property. This disaster and others like the tsunami call upon us to act with solidarity in order to prevent further sacrifice. We express our condolences to the Government of the United States of America and to the victims. To them we express our solidarity and our desire that their lives will soon be able to return to normal.

We congratulate the United Nations, which over the past 30 years has been encouraging and facilitating encounters such as this one, fostering the growth of a universal conscience so that our endeavours to restore human dignity may lead to peace, stability and socio-economic development.

Nevertheless, we observe with concern that despite this arduous labour of awakening the world's conscience, the excellent declarations adopted and the programmes agreed upon, we are still a very long way away from bringing about a world of well-being for all. In point of fact, the difficult subject of poverty — so complex to eradicate — requires multidimensional efforts and the involvement of all players in human society so that both the poor and the rich, the victims and the beneficiaries of the current social inequalities — everyone — should be crucial players in the fight against the sorry state of humankind.

Indeed, many feel that poverty, which is the fruit of underdevelopment, arises because of the lack of responsibility of some Governments that have been unable to judiciously administer their economic resources and cultural values, conforming to oligarchic systems imposed by current trade relations. Certainly, we are facing a situation that calls out to us all, because we are being asked to abandon the practices of the old system, which does not recognize the positive values of humanity. We are trying to put an end to a

long history of unfair competition that can only perpetuate the poverty of the weakest, insecurity, instability and violence.

The situation demands our attention because the experience of the United Nations shows that the interdependence of nations must take precedence in relations between States. It has been shown that however economically or militarily powerful a nation is, it cannot fight alone against the effects of the chilling terrorism that the nations of the world are currently facing. We have also understood that the hunger, dire poverty and underdevelopment endured by many countries cannot be eliminated without the help of wealthy countries — which became so at the expense of the weak ones.

The United Nations is called upon to act because its Members are afraid of their own resolutions. Many mighty nations do not want to reallocate their military budgets to aid poorer countries. They are afraid of spending a minimal percentage of their gross national product to support development programmes for the countries in greatest need and are resisting forgiving the debt of the poorest countries at whose expense they have been able to accumulate their capital reserves.

In that regard, we would like to congratulate the countries of the Group of Eight for having forgiven the debt of some poor countries.

In the light of this selfishness and lack of solidarity and in the absence of international cooperation, Equatorial Guinea has understood that the main responsibility for achieving the Millennium Development Goals falls directly on one's own Government. In Equatorial Guinea we stress a policy that focuses on the people: a practical humanism that attempts to put a human face on democracy, justice, freedom, cooperation and globalization.

In order to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, to achieve universal primary education, to promote gender equality and freedom for women, to reduce infant mortality, to improve maternal health, to fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, to guarantee the sustainability of the environment and to promote a world association for development in addition to the programmes currently being implemented, my Government has just set up a social development fund which accounts for 40 per cent of the general State budget for the year 2005.

Clearly, without money no country can achieve, even minimally, the Millennium Development Goals. We understand the problems faced by countries not lucky enough to possess exploitable economic resources, so we call upon the richer countries to demonstrate their solidarity and humanism by releasing funds and transferring technology, in the manner set out in the draft outcome document that is before the General Assembly (A/60/L.1).

Obviously, we need huge sums of money to achieve our goals. That is why, in support of the French proposal to adopt innovative mechanisms for financing, we feel it is necessary to establish national and international solidarity levies. We therefore agree that a levy should be imposed on airline tickets in order to deal with such grave, endemic diseases as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. My delegation would be even happier if such a solidarity levy could also be extended to the investments made by major multinational companies, because of the benefits that they receive from the poorest countries.

I would like to conclude my statement by encouraging everyone to act in a spirit of solidarity in adopting the draft outcome document submitted by the President of the General Assembly and to take the necessary action to implement its provisions for the benefit of all humankind.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia.

President Pohamba: I wish to congratulate the Co-Chairpersons on their election and on the efficient manner in which they are guiding the deliberations of this High-level Plenary Meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sympathy and condolences to the people of the United States of America for the loss of life and the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Since the achievement of our independence 15 years ago, the Government of Namibia has assumed the historic task of redressing the human, social and economic consequences suffered by our people during the years of apartheid colonialism. In 1990, the World Bank estimated our per capita income at $1,200, ranking Namibia as a low middle-income country.

However, on a closer look, that figure reveals many contradictions.

We inherited a dual society with the worst income disparities seen anywhere in the world. Five percent of the population had access to modern infrastructure and to a formal economy, and approximately 0.3 per cent owned 44 per cent of the land, while the remainder of the population occupied only 41 per cent. On the other hand, 95 per cent of the people lived in poverty. They did not have access to electricity, clean water or sanitary facilities. They suffered the effects of poor nutrition and diseases. One out of 10 children died before the age of 5.

Those are stark legacies of apartheid colonialism. Since independence, we have moved with a clear intent to reverse them, and we have made tremendous progress. We are moving with the same resolve to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Therefore, we count on our development partners to join us in our efforts to translate the noble development objectives into concrete outcomes so that we can promote social justice, democracy, peace and the welfare of all our people.

By adopting the Millennium Development Goals, Member States have taken a bold and historic step. Our resolve should therefore propel us towards a new dawn of hope to conquer poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease. We must mobilize resources and bring within the reach of billions of people the hope that they and their children can have a better life.

Let us join hands and move forward to find practical solutions to the challenges of our time. We have a sacred duty and a noble mission. We should not be found wanting.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Kessai Note, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

President Note: A warm greeting of *Iokwe* from the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands at this pivotal gathering.

On behalf of the people and the Government of the Marshall Islands, I wish to express our condolences and sympathies to the victims and families who have suffered severely as a result of the recent catastrophic Hurricane Katrina in the United States.

I join my colleagues in commending the Secretary-General for his report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005).

I reaffirm the commitment of the Marshall Islands to the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the right of peoples to self-determination, in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. The 23 million people of Taiwan represent too significant a portion of the world's population to be denied membership again and again in an Organization that adheres to the principles of universality and self-determination among the peoples of the world.

For 60 years, the vision, values and principles espoused in the Charter of the United Nations have guided the Organization, which remains our last, best hope, in an age when new dangers are emerging, for finding practicable measures that will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burdens of infectious diseases, terrorism, armaments and the fallout of nuclear-weapon tests.

Founded to provide for the collective security of sovereign nations, the Organization is now charged with managing a number of new dangers that require our joint response. Once charged with protecting national borders, we are all called upon to address dangers that know no borders.

As important to the Marshall Islands as potential terrorist threats are the social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities that we continue to face and endure. The support of the international community and the full implementation of internationally agreed principles and goals are crucial for our sustainable development.

Around the world, the exploitation of people, lands, oceans and the environment continue to pose real and immediate threats to the very existence of Marshall Islands. Global warming and sea-level rise continue to threaten us. The Marshall Islands reiterates its call to those States that have not ratified the Kyoto Protocol to do so without delay and to take further steps fully to implement the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Protocol. Without such global actions to mitigate climate change and arrest sea-level rise, our national efforts towards sustainable development will be rendered meaningless, and my people will become environmental refugees.

The Marshall Islands' power lies not in our economic strength but in our ability to cooperate. We remain an active Member of this Organization despite the resultant financial burden on our small economy. We are hopeful that our smallness and remoteness will not hinder us from receiving the benefits that this Organization provides to small island States like mine.

The Marshall Islands is grateful to those Member States that continue to provide us access to training and technology, as well as to the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies that support our capacity-building. Continued commitment is vital in nurturing the development of the Marshallese people so that they can become self-reliant.

The Millennium Declaration we adopted five years ago has led to the articulation of eight specific Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015. While many countries are on track, broad regions are far off track to achieve most or all of the Goals. The Marshall Islands remains committed to reaching the Millennium Development Goals and targets. Achievement of the Goals, however, cannot be fully accomplished in the absence of the complete implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Working together, we can leave our children the legacy of a better future by setting a new global agenda entailing bold actions and by shaping an effective and reformed United Nations. I wish to emphasize my support of the reform of the United Nations Secretariat and of the Security Council, in particular the inclusion of Japan as a permanent member; and the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council, Democracy Initiatives and the Democracy Fund.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania.

President Adamkus: Allow me to begin by expressing my appreciation for the leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and for the determination of outgoing General Assembly President Jean Ping for having taken up and promoted with great dedication and vigour the comprehensive reform agenda of the Organization.

The world has changed significantly since the foundation of the United Nations, and our Organization must change accordingly in order to be able to fully and effectively respond to the expectations of our nations. I believe, therefore, that the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and a comprehensive reform of the Organization must go hand in hand.

The courage to change must be an essential attribute of this summit — the courage to embrace a United Nations reform that reaffirms and locks in the intrinsic links between development, security and human rights, and the courage to implement to the fullest the United Nations goal of being a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of common ends.

We cannot approach this summit as business as usual. There can be no business as usual in a world which explores the farthest reaches of the universe yet continues to watch millions of people die from starvation — a world where terrorism spreads fear and horror among nations, where transnational crime, lawlessness and corruption make a mockery of human hopes for a decent existence, where preventable infectious diseases and natural disasters destroy numerous lives and wipe out entire areas. The United Nations, created to deal with the legacy of the Second World War, must now stand up to these new threats and challenges. For it to be able do so, a comprehensive reform of the United Nations is necessary, including a major management overhaul aimed at ensuring greater accountability, transparency, efficiency and professionalism.

We can no longer delay reform of the Security Council, an essential body which should be fully equipped and enjoy the requisite legitimacy to operate in a world that presents it with increasingly challenging tasks. Lithuania has consistently maintained that the Security Council should be expanded in both categories of membership, with the inclusion of new major international actors as permanent members.

It is essential that we reaffirm our previous commitments. But we must go much further. We must build a United Nations for the twenty-first century. Insistence on preserving the status quo of this most inclusive multilateral Organization will not protect us from the horrors of poverty and extremism or from the threat of weapons of mass destruction getting into the

hands of terrorists, or from the increasing threat of environmental degradation.

Our shared responsibility as world leaders is paramount. It is our duty to adopt here, in New York, substantial and far-reaching decisions. We, developed and developing countries alike, must work together to accelerate progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals across the globe and especially in Africa. The recent commitment by the European Union (EU) to increase levels of official development assistance (ODA) underlines the priority that the EU attaches to this immense task.

As a new donor country, Lithuania fully subscribes to those commitments. We know that it will take us time to measure up to common donorship levels. But we are moving ahead, providing advice and assistance from our immediate neighbourhood to the South Caucasus, to Iraq and Afghanistan. We are determined to continue, because we remember the value of the assistance extended when we needed it most, and we know it is our responsibility to help others in our turn.

For us — who for decades survived by hope of freedom alone — this summit is also about hope. We must make sure that the individual, as the main element of the world community of nations, is placed at the centre of the United Nations as a whole. Mainstreaming human rights into all areas of activities of the United Nations and promoting democracy and the rule of law, as well as the responsibility to protect, must be part and parcel of the United Nations of the twenty-first century.

We therefore call on all nations to take expeditious decisions enabling the creation of an effective Human Rights Council with a robust mandate, a Council that would be fully operational without delay.

Terrorism threatens our very right to life, our right to live free from fear and open to the diversity of the cultures and civilizations around us. The relevance of the United Nations as the truly universal and inclusive Organization will be measured by how we are protected from the horror of terror, including the threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists.

We join other nations in the full condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purpose, and we fully support the earliest possible adoption of a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy as well as a relevant convention on international terrorism.

We, the United Nations, must also offer hope to people in countries emerging from conflict by ensuring that the vicious cycle of destruction, lawlessness, impunity and poverty is broken with the help of the international community. We welcome the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission as a significant building block of a renewed United Nations and urge that it be made operational before the end of this year.

The responsibility to protect is also about hope. The responsibility to protect is our joint commitment to an individual's right to life, and a promise that he or she will not fall victim to genocide, war crimes or ethnic cleansing while the rest of the world goes about its business as usual.

We, the leaders of the world gathered here this week, share a unique momentum and the responsibility for reform. As heads of State or Government, we must send a loud and clear message, regarding the scope and direction of change. We must pledge to continue to implement vigorously a comprehensive package of reforms that will bring out the very best of the United Nations — our United Nations — as a unique vehicle for concerted multilateral action. Because, as the Secretary-General noted yesterday and as we all witness increasingly, in this interrelated world of the twenty-first century we all stand or fall together.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Janez Drnovšek, President of the Republic of Slovenia.

President Drnovšek (*spoke in Slovenian; English text provided by the delegation*): This Meeting is an opportunity to take a close and critical look at the reality of humanity's situation and the effectiveness of the United Nations. I think it would make little sense for this High-level Plenary Meeting to be just one more of the many meetings where we politely exchange friendly words, adopt a general declaration and go our various ways, leaving nothing substantially changed.

The findings of experts in examining the achievement of some of the Millennium Development Goals are frightening. World poverty is not decreasing, but is in fact growing. More than a billion people live

below the threshold of absolute poverty and in critical medical conditions. The reasons for this state of affairs are known.

Access for developing countries to rich and developed markets and their access to financial institutions, new technologies and medicines is still being thwarted or at least significantly limited. Global trade relations are also unfair. The pressures of agricultural policy, especially from the developed countries, are such that they are literally destroying agriculture in the developing countries. As the calculations at Oxfam indicate, an improvement in access to world markets of a mere one per cent each for Africa, East Asia, South Asia and Latin America could lift as many as 128 million people out of poverty.

Financial relations are extremely unfair. Developing countries today are paying enormous amounts just to service the interest on debt. Much of this debt has never been used for the benefit of people and has, therefore, been defined as illegitimate or odious debt. Lenders knew very well that they were making loans to corrupt regimes and that these would not help people in hardship. Repaying such debt has rendered poor countries even poorer. In recent months and years, some significant efforts have been made. The recent writing-off of the multilateral debt of the poorest countries of the world is welcome, but not enough. For numerous countries that are struggling to attain the Millennium Development Goals, their debt should be written off without any further conditions.

Official development assistance is growing extremely slowly. While we welcome the recent agreement on increasing aid by 2010, we must be aware that this commitment was first made in 1970 and has not been honoured right up to the present day. In recent years, several innovative proposals have been made to increase development funds, yet none of them has broken through the inertia of the financial institutions. And it is completely clear that we cannot expect any positive breakthroughs using the existing financial instruments.

Poverty is not the only danger that burdens the world. Our very existence on the planet is under threat. I wish to draw attention to climate change and atmospheric warming. There appears to be an emerging consensus among scientists that each year we are witnessing increasing numbers of catastrophic events linked to global warming: hurricanes, floods and droughts. It is in this area that it is perhaps most illustrative and clear to everyone on this earth that we are in fact all connected and interdependent. Under the aegis of the United Nations, we must work together to find more effective, more determined solutions that raise the general awareness of people, especially politicians.

One could continue to list staggering facts and figures ad infinitum. The consequences of a world without balance are becoming increasingly catastrophic. Global imbalances are growing and are now at their highest level in the history of humanity. It is, therefore, an illusion to expect that the world will be balanced, that there will be no wars, no terrorism, corruption and crime of the most brutal dimensions, if such trends continue.

No kind of security measure and no kind of protection against terrorism and global threats can give anyone complete security. We will all be defeated. So burying our heads in the sand is a reflection of our lack of responsibility to humanity today and to all future generations.

The developed world in particular should assume a decisive role in that regard: the biggest and most advanced countries and all those international organizations that, together with the United Nations, have a decisive impact on the evolving situation of humankind and bear the responsibility for its development. An extraordinary responsibility is incumbent upon all of us participating at this High-level Meeting.

If we wish to pass on a more just, sustainable and humane world to the next generation, we must be prepared to significantly alter our habits and beliefs. We have to be aware of the suffering of a large part of humankind and strengthen our sensitivity towards people around the world who live in distress.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Armando Emílio Guebuza, President of the Republic of Mozambique.

President Guebuza: On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, and on my own account, I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating the delegation of Gabon and Sweden on their election to chair this important and historic High-level Plenary Meeting of the General

Assembly. We are confident that, under their enlightened and skilful guidance, our deliberations will be crowned with success.

Allow me to take this opportunity to reiterate the solidarity and condolences of the people and the Government of Mozambique to the people of the United States and to its Government in connection with the human losses and destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.

We wish to commend the Secretary-General for his leadership and tireless efforts aimed at reforming the United Nations with a view to making it more effective in addressing present and future challenges. In that context, we congratulate him on his report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), which constitutes the basis for our discussions.

The celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations offers us an opportunity to evoke the successes of our international institution over the past six decades. Indeed, since its inception, the United Nations has been able to fulfil the basic principles enshrined in its Charter.

The adoption five years ago of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), represented a firm commitment by the international community to halving extreme poverty, accelerating human development and facilitating the gradual and effective integration of the developing world into the global economy.

Despite the progress made so far, we note with great concern that abject poverty remains a feature of the majority of developing countries. In Africa, for instance, available data indicate that most countries in our continent are far from achieving all or most of the Millennium Development Goals. In that regard, we call upon the international community to increase the flows of official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment. We also call for the establishment of a fairer world trade system and for total debt cancellation for poor countries.

At the same time, however, we are encouraged by recent positive developments. The decision by developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national produce (GNP) for official development assistance by no later than 2015 is praiseworthy. Equally commendable is the decision taken by Group of Eight countries leading to a doubling of development aid to Africa and debt relief for highly indebted poor countries, including my own country, Mozambique.

As a result of successful elections in Mozambique, we have been bestowed with the responsibility of succeeding Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, a statesman with whom most of those present in this Hall interacted a great deal. As we take the floor for the first time in the General Assembly, we would like to express our hope that Mozambique will continue to be able to count on the Assembly's support and encouragement for the successful implementation of our five-year programme and subsequent programmes, all of which focus on poverty reduction. We also welcome private investment, given its role in realizing our strategic objectives against poverty.

It is our hope that the momentum created by this High-level Plenary Meeting and the proposals of the Secretary-General will give a new impetus to our commitment to make the world a better place for all humankind. It is imperative that we all translate our political commitment into concrete action.

We would like to conclude our remarks by reiterating the pledge of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique to continue its efforts towards the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Heinz Fischer, Federal President of the Republic of Austria.

President Fischer: In three months, in December of this year, Austria will celebrate 50 years of membership in the United Nations. Austria joined the United Nations in 1955, during a crucial period of its history and right after regaining its independence.

During its 60 years of existence, the United Nations has been lauded as well as criticized. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has constantly worked towards improving our Organization so that it can better deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century. With his report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), he initiated another ambitious reform process. The large number of heads of State or Government gathered here proves the importance of that common effort. We truly and strongly believe that

the United Nations will emerge from this summit with an enhanced capacity to deal with today's threats and tomorrow's challenges.

The draft summit outcome (A/60/L.1) contains valuable commitments in the field of development, as well as new common understandings on peace and security, human rights, the rule of law and the strengthening of the Secretariat. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, we are, on the other hand, concerned about the lack of agreement in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. However, the package as a whole is a good start. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, Mr. Jean Ping, and his able facilitators — all those who have done this difficult work — for their great efforts.

Allow me to highlight some issues of particular importance for my country, Austria.

One of the most important results of this summit will be the decision to establish a Peacebuilding Commission. It will provide valuable support for countries emerging from conflict situations and ensure a coordinated and coherent response from the international community. The European Union, as a major global donor with a strong record for worldwide and sustained efforts in the field of peacebuilding, must be able to contribute to the work of the Commission.

Austria welcomes the agreement on a Human Rights Council. The new body should improve the efficiency and credibility of the United Nations in the field of human rights. We must now find the proper structures and procedures for the Council. Austria also deems it important that the Council be a standing body, which must have the ability to address serious human rights violations and ensure opportunities for the participation of observer States and civil society.

In my opinion, adherence to the rule of law is a fundamental prerequisite for peaceful international relations as well as for democracy and stability within States. It is my conviction that it was a long and difficult but rewarding process for many of our societies to ensure that the principle of the rule of law has prevailed in the framework of democratic national States. It will now be a task for coming years and decades to fully implement that principle in the field of international relations as well.

This summit is a test of our collective political will to give sufficient impetus to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. The Millennium Development Goals will only be attained, first, if the quantity and quality of official development assistance is increased; secondly, if the development dimension of the Doha round is fully secured; and thirdly, if conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation processes are given more prominence in international cooperation. Violence is deadly for development.

Over the past 50 years the United Nations and the principles of the Charter have been at the heart of Austria's foreign policy. A modern, efficient and strengthened United Nations is of particular importance for Austria. We feel privileged to host one of the United Nations headquarters in Vienna and appreciate the valuable and important work and activities of its institutions.

We are committed to continue our active and constructive contribution in the various forums and bodies of the United Nations. In that context, we would very much appreciate it if Member States put their confidence in Austria and supported Austria's candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the term 2009-2010.

In conclusion I would like to reiterate my conviction that this reform summit will strengthen the United Nations and make it fit to address the threats to peace and security facing today's world. The commitments contained in our draft outcome document will still need to be implemented and deadlines will have to be met. Let us make good use of the political momentum created by the draft outcome document in order to ensure the lasting success of this world summit and a world of peace.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ivo Miro Jović, President of the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

President Jović (*spoke in Bosnian; English text provided by the delegation*): Allow me at the outset to express my gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan; to the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which provided us with a most comprehensive document (A/59/565) as the backbone of our discussions and deliberations; and to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth

session, Mr. Jean Ping, who made an outstanding effort in coordinating the open-ended working group and preparing the draft outcome document for the consideration of this impressive gathering of world leaders.

I would also like to take this opportunity to convey the resolve of all the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina to support the United Nations, as well as their preparedness to assume their fair share of obligations and tasks in order to reinvigorate the Organization at this pivotal moment in its existence.

Back in the early 1960s, at the peak of the cold war, during the Cuban crisis, there was a discussion around a dinner table among diplomats accredited to the United Nations here in New York. As the discussion became heated over how soon the world would face imminent destruction and disappearance, and while the diplomats agreed that we were doomed to perish but continued arguing about who was to be blamed, a quiet gentleman at the far end of the table raised his hand to get the attention of his peers. "Sincerely, my dear friends," he said, "I fail to understand what the real cause of your argument is, when all this will be recorded in history as a mere 50 years of turmoil".

Well, fortunately, he was right, and those 50 years of turmoil are behind us, as is the cold war, the silly arms race, the imminent threat of nuclear disaster and the divided world as we used to know it. Today, we face a new 50 years of challenges and threats, and we are determined to do something about it. In the meantime, our Organization has grown three times in size, colonialism has been relegated to the history books, bricks from Berlin wall have become collectors' items and Brazil still rules the soccer field. The world has become a better place.

Or has it? The rich are getting richer and the poor are still poor. We had the same number of inter-State wars in 1990s as we had in the 1950s. Instead of tuberculosis we now have retroviruses and avian flu. Some women still cannot vote, and many children still do not go to school. I wish that the list of problems we are dealing with were exhausted at the number of paragraphs of the draft outcome document. But it is not.

I come from a small, but brave and proud country. It is among those that comprise almost half of the membership of the United Nations, those with fewer than 5 million citizens. And we are one of those with under $1,500 of gross national product per capita. We are referred to as a post-conflict society. We are still tending the wounds of a tragic war. We are still chasing war criminals. And we are still desperately seeking mutual forgiveness and reconciliation.

This year we will commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the accord that indeed ended the war but failed to provide the foundations for sustainable peace. The solid foundation of lasting peace provides for the equality of all nations and citizens, but that is not what we have now: one State, two entities and three nations is the non-functional structure bequeathed to us by Dayton. We therefore decided, through negotiations and consensus among all three constituent nations, to change it for the better and to adjust it to our needs and wants.

Despite the complexity of our political and constitutional structure, we are committed to improve by consensus the Constitution that was given to us as a gift, and to take the ownership of the State from the Office of the High Representative.

We are committed to ensuring that our citizens enjoy the highest standards of human and civil rights, as set out in the European Convention on Human Rights, including their rights as Croats, Bosniacs and Serbs, members of three constituent nations, to be informed and educated in their native languages.

We thus intend to meet our international obligations as set out in the Millennium Development Goals: stability, prosperity, good governance, transparency and the fulfilment of our international legal obligations. We rightly believe that we belong to the European family of nations, and even though we are sometimes neglected, we believe that we can become a factor of stability in the region of the Balkans.

I am proud to inform the Assembly that our Foreign Minister has just signed the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. Prior to coming here, the State presidency, of which I am President, gave the authority to our Permanent Representative here in New York to sign the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and the House of Representatives of the State Parliament approved the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We pay our dues to the

United Nations and affiliated organizations regularly and in a timely manner, and we have peacekeepers in Haiti, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Cyprus, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As far as United Nations reform is concerned, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been closely following all the recent developments. We have regular consultations with our neighbours, countries from the region and members of the Eastern European regional group. We are committed to supporting any and all reform solutions that stand a chance of receiving consensus from the majority of Member countries, including the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the expansion of the Security Council. Respecting unreservedly the United Nations Charter, we support the principle that any decision by the United Nations or its bodies that affects or in any way limits the sovereignty of a Member State needs to be made unanimously or by consensus.

We share the view of our fellow developing countries that we need better representation in the Security Council. But it would be a pity — and the whole reform process would lose its momentum — if we exhausted ourselves deliberating the pros and cons of model A and model B. The bottom line is that we need a stronger, more efficient, better financed, more agile, more alert Organization to address the threats to international peace and security in the twenty-first century.

We stand ready to take on our shoulders a fair share of that load.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Georgi Parvanov, President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

President Parvanov (*spoke in Bulgarian. English text provided by the delegation*): The collective voice of reason calling for peace and cooperation has, as a rule, prevailed in world politics in the wake of a dreadful cycle of destructive wars and social cataclysm. Today, 60 years after the end of the most devastating armed conflict in history, humanity has a chance to break that deplorable cycle. I am confident that at this crucial moment we, the leaders and the peoples of the United Nations, will be able to mobilize our political will and resources and prove that the lessons of the past have taught us to meet the challenges of the present.

I am here today to add the voice of the Republic of Bulgaria to the shared affirmation of political will expressed by participants at this High-level Meeting aimed at speeding up implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and strengthening the efficiency of our Organization. It is clear that our aspiration to live in an environment of collective security will be doomed to failure if we do not make radical progress in overcoming hunger and poverty, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and other mass epidemics, protecting the environment and expanding access to modern education.

We cannot be content with what has been achieved in the past five years. If the current pace of action is maintained, we cannot expect to meet the internationally agreed development goals before the end of the century. That is why we must agree to redouble our efforts today and to stand united in our mission to save humankind.

My country welcomes the draft outcome document (A/60/L.1) — the product of a very intensive diplomatic effort over the past several months. We regard it as a solid basis for implementing further the package of commitments made, then reaffirmed and developed at this rostrum.

The meaning of security today differs substantially from what the founding fathers of the United Nations perceived it to mean 60 years ago — and even from what we meant by it five years ago. Threats have become much more diverse, subtle and unpredictable. We need responsible thinking, expressed in a culture of global solidarity, cooperation and mutual assistance. Fighting the destructive force of terrorism, which totally rejects all principles of humaneness and democracy, continues to be a task of primary significance. The new challenges dictate our priorities: the United Nations agenda emphasises the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, arms control, the early prevention of crises and conflicts and the expansion of the capacity of the United Nations to conduct a wide range of peace operations. In this context, the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission has become an urgent task.

A safer world of freedom, democracy and prosperity cannot be built if we do not effectively combat international terrorism. However, we must meet that challenge without infringing upon the principles of democracy, pluralism and human rights.

For us, the concept of human rights goes beyond the well-known standards set out in United Nations instruments and further developed in the Millennium Declaration. This is where we see a role for the new Human Rights Council. We endorse the concept of the "responsibility to protect". We also call for a greater role and more resources for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and support the United Nations Democracy Fund.

Last but not least, in order for the United Nations to be able to cope with a highly challenging environment, no effort should be spared in carrying out the projected institutional reform or in radically improving transparency, accountability and the overall efficiency of the Organization. Learning from our failures, we support the policy of zero tolerance for abuse, corruption or mismanagement. Bulgaria is in favour of well-balanced, constructive solutions aimed at ensuring the better functioning of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and the streamlining of the work of the General Assembly and its committees.

This Meeting clearly demonstrates the urgency of reaching a new, action-oriented consensus among Member States on issues of key importance to our world. Identifying adequate responses to urgent issues, completing the necessary reform of the activities and structures of the United Nations, enabling the Organization to maintain its role as a universal international organization: all these are crucial for the future of humankind.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam.

Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah: My warmest greetings go to all my friends and colleagues. The opportunity to meet like this is a rare privilege, and I very much appreciate the chance to hear their views and to share their experiences. So I would like to thank the Co-Chairpersons and the Secretary-General very much indeed for bringing us all together again. Perhaps above all, at this time, it gives me the opportunity to express my people's deepest sympathy and condolences to our American hosts, whose people have suffered so much from the effects of Hurricane Katrina.

In assessing our progress in Brunei Darussalam towards the Millennium Goals, one thing has become clearly apparent: the Goals have taken on an even deeper significance than perhaps we initially realized. At first, they seemed to represent a kind of development checklist. Some set national aims such as halving extreme poverty, establishing universal primary education, reducing infant and maternal mortality, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and endemic diseases and setting economic targets. Others were aimed at universal objectives, promoting gender equality, sustaining the environment and developing international partnerships.

Looking at them in that way, our people at first tended to see them as targets that applied mainly to other countries in the world beyond our shores. In fact, they felt that they had already reached most of the specific social, economic and cultural goals. So the instinctive feeling that the Millennium Goals applied largely to other countries was perhaps quite understandable.

That was five years ago. Since then, there have been profound changes. They have led to a far deeper understanding among our people. This development has been prompted by real events. The outside world has imposed itself on our region in dramatic fashion. Our people have witnessed terrorist attacks, natural disasters, climate change, strange new viruses, often bewildering new technology and rapid and sometimes equally bewildering economic change.

All this has shown us that in today's reality the expression "the world beyond our shores" does not have a great deal of meaning. There may be other countries beyond our shores, but there is, in fact, just one world, which we all share.

The new realizations which have resulted can be put quite simply: the future will involve more and more contact with the rest of the world; we will be more and more affected by what happens outside our borders, and we will be more and more dependent on that outside world. That means one thing: future peace, prosperity and confidence depend not just on ourselves, but on the success of all nations. Hence, we are all partners, no matter what our backgrounds, cultures, faiths and histories.

In other words, our people have begun to realize that confidence in the future for one community can be achieved only if all communities feel similar

confidence. For us, this understanding has been the most important result of the establishment of the Millennium Goals. We have realized that unless the Goals are reached by everyone, there will be no lasting security. Each failed objective will be a root cause of insecurity.

That places the Millennium Goals in an extra dimension. It reveals them not only as crucial for each individual nation and its people, but as central to the profound political, economic, cultural and social challenges we must all meet together. Achieving the goals will help to consign to history the twentieth-century concept of first-, second- and third-world countries. It will help to develop a single twenty-first-century world in which we will all have shared responsibilities and shared hopes. In this way, our people see the Millennium Goals as a historic United Nations task, and we will continue to work with our fellow Members to do whatever we can to ensure that we all reach the targets that we have accepted.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

King Mswati III: I bring with me greetings from my country on this auspicious occasion, the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. We also express our sympathies to the people of the United States of America for the tragic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

I am happy to address a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly once again, having done so not too long ago when we, the heads of State or Government, gathered here to adopt the historic Millennium Declaration in 2000. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted as a road map for achieving that vision, compelled the international community to commit to working collectively to improve the standard of living of our peoples in a safer and more secure world.

It is good that today we are meeting to review progress in our implementation of the MDGs and to collectively reaffirm our commitment to the millions of people who deserve a better and more decent standard of living in this millennium. The success of that action requires the political will and the firm commitment of both the developing world and our development partners.

I am pleased to report that we of the Kingdom of Swaziland went back home and immediately acted on the United Nations Millennium Declaration by setting our priorities for fighting poverty through the creation of jobs in manufacturing, construction, tourism, agribusiness and other areas.

In the past five years we have recorded some favourable results in our fight to reduce poverty. Job and wealth creation has always been at the centre of our plans and strategies.

Before coming to this meeting, we conducted a review of our millennium development programme, which has clearly shown us that we are still, however, a long way from overcoming the challenges of poverty reduction and human development. Our gains continue to be eroded by formidable challenges, including natural disasters such as droughts, floods, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the reduction of preferential markets for our goods. One major outcome of all those factors has been increasing unemployment, which continues to pose a serious threat to our economic progress.

We have therefore embarked on a new economic approach which emphasizes that while we continue to attract and welcome foreign direct investment, we must at the same time create our own vibrant business community that will spearhead sustainable economic growth. To that end we have already crafted and are implementing a national small and medium enterprise policy, which emphasizes capacity-building through the training and funding of our entrepreneurs.

It was in line with that new economic approach that we recently held a national job creation summit at which we raised more that 1.6 billion emalangeni, which should enable us to kick-start our economy. That public-private sector partnership initiative aims at creating more than 50,000 new jobs.

Having played our part in mobilizing domestic resources as a developing economy, it is proper for us to request our international development partners to meet us halfway through grants and other official development support. It would not be fair to neglect our case just because we have been classified in a higher category. It should be recognized and appreciated that our country is where it is because of our continued efforts. We deserve to be supported in order to keep moving forward. We also hope that the international financial institutions will continue

supporting us with more concessional loans to enable us to meet our targets for achieving the MDGs.

The main key to our success is the availability of external and, in particular, preferential markets, which are vital for the growth of our economy. By continuing to provide us with preferential markets our development partners would enable us to reach a level that might allow us one day to compete on an equal footing. As an agricultural economy we are determined and have planned to continue diversifying our products with more emphasis on adding value through processing and quality control.

On another note, I am very pleased to report that, in pursuit of larger freedom, the Swazi nation has crafted a new Constitution that embodies fundamental human rights. That Constitution is a result of extensive consultation at the grass-roots level. We do not claim to have made a perfect document. But like all nations of the world, we shall continue to improve our Constitution through amendments as the need arises. I should like to thank all those who helped us during the drafting process, especially the United Nations Development Programme and the Commonwealth.

Let me now briefly comment on the great work we have embarked on to reform the United Nations in order to make it stronger, more representative and effective in its noble mandate of managing global affairs.

As you are aware, the African Union articulated a Common Position on this matter following a lengthy debate on the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565). Our Position states that

> "Africa's goal is to be fully represented in all the decision-making organs of the [United Nations], particularly in the Security Council, which is the principal decision-making organ of the [United Nations] in matters relating to international peace and security". (*African Union document Ext/EX.CL.2 (VII)*)

For our representation to be effective, Africa must be allowed to play its role both in the permanent and non-permanent categories.

We believe that a more effective United Nations system should be able to reduce tensions and conflicts within and between States, so that peace as a condition for development and economic growth will prevail. We share the Secretary-General's desire to have a decision taken on this matter at this summit, as inaction will continue to delay the development agenda, thereby prolonging the suffering of many of our poverty-stricken peoples.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of the Comoros.

President Assoumani (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the delegation of the Union of the Comoros let me at the outset express once again to the entire people of the United States of America the sympathy and support of the Government and the people of the Comoros in the wake of the terrible blow inflicted by the passage of Hurricane Katrina, which severely shook this country and caused the loss of thousands of human lives and unprecedented physical damage.

Next, I should like to congratulate the Co-Chairpersons on their wisdom and clear thinking in guiding the work of this session, which is a key moment for the future of the world and humanity.

My country welcomes the decision taken by the General Assembly in resolution 58/291 of 6 May 2004 to hold this summit meeting, and I should like to congratulate the outgoing President, Jean Ping, for the effective work achieved.

Five years ago, the highest leaders of the member countries of the community of nations made a firm commitment to pool their efforts to wage a war — organized and relentless — against poverty and all the ensuing scourges, which pose a serious threat to international peace and security and are a major obstacle to the process of development in our countries.

This summit will allow us to take full stock of the progress made, but also to correct our errors, to adjust our methods and to target our action better, and in particular to reiterate our collective commitment to the Millennium Development Goals up to 2015.

My country welcomes all of the work undertaken in preparation for this decisive landmark session, and pays a well-deserved tribute to Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his report, entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), where he rightly underscores the need to promote a world of dignity, free from fear and want.

The Union of the Comoros is heartened by the proposals made in the draft outcome document of the summit (A/60/L.1).

As such, we subscribe to the draft outcome, because its contents can truly give rise to the international momentum that is necessary to achieve the MDGs. My country also supports the draft comprehensive convention against terrorism and strongly supports the proposals made with respect to establishing a peacebuilding mechanism aimed at assisting countries emerging from crisis. Similarly, we welcome the proposal to establish a fund to promote democracy worldwide.

We encourage the efforts undertaken worldwide to promote peace and stability. Specifically, we encourage initiatives undertaken recently in the Middle East. The establishment of a viable Palestinian State is the only means of creating the necessary conditions for harmonious coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

We believe that the international community, given the world's current level of development, has the means to promote the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. We remain convinced that, given this level of development and with a consistent commitment on the part of the developed countries, key victories can be achieved in the areas of improving maternal health; fighting hunger, poverty, terrorism, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; promoting a sustainable environment; and in terms of our shared concern to establish a global partnership for development.

That is why the Union of the Comoros takes this opportunity to pay tribute to the G-8 countries, which showed their solidarity vis-à-vis certain developing countries by granting them total debt relief and for the readiness they expressed to extend that generous and welcome measure to other developing countries.

My country also welcomes the will expressed during the most recent summit of the Group of 77 and China, held at Doha, Qatar, to establish a global development fund. We pay tribute also to the readiness expressed by Qatar to contribute $20 million to that fund.

My country supports the efforts made by Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, and supports his proposal for an air ticket levy to finance efforts to fight pandemics.

Finally, my country deeply appreciates the proposals made at the summit by the President of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Hu Jintao, which are very proactive and reflect a strong commitment to the promotion of peace, security and development.

The Union of the Comoros is working steadfastly to implement the MDGs, despite its extremely limited resources. In that context, we have just put together, together with the United Nations Development Programme, our second report, for 2005, on the MDGs, following on from the 2003 report. This latest report includes, inter alia, a stocktaking of the situation and forecasts looking to 2015.

To that end, our Government has made considerable efforts to ensure financing of several major projects within the framework of the establishment of basic development infrastructure. The portion of the State budget allocated to basic investment has risen from 10 to 30 per cent in the past five years. However, during the same period, official development assistance declined by two thirds.

Similarly, action has been taken in the framework of a national plan to promote girls' education, to operationalize structures aimed at addressing the empowerment of women, and to raise awareness with respect to the implementation of the family code that has just been enacted by the National Assembly.

Once all of the new institutions of the country were established, in April 2004, our authorities decided to make our country's socio-economic development a priority for the State, in order to build upon the gains resulting from national reconciliation; to make irreversible the democratic process that is under way, in the framework of the promotion of the rule of law, good governance, human rights; and, lastly, to promote the well-being of our people.

In that context, the authorities intend to mobilize all necessary resources in order to ensure the success of the elections, to be held in 2006 as part of the democratic process and which, for our country and the world watching us, will be a key yardstick in terms of our ability to achieve democracy, the rule of law and good governance.

Hence the will of the Government of the Union of the Comoros — with the support of all of its partners,

in particular the African Union, the Republic of South Africa and Mauritius — to mobilize the necessary efforts to ensure the success of the donor conference for the Union of the Comoros, in accordance with the various agreements signed as part of the national reconciliation process.

Let me also take this welcome opportunity formally to invite eminent representatives of the countries attending this summit to take part in the donor conference for the Union of the Comoros, to be held under the auspices of the African Union on 8 December next in Mauritius. I should like to thank the Prime Minister and the Government of Mauritius for having agreed to host that conference.

On behalf of my country, let me pay well-deserved tribute to the international community as a whole, which, under the auspices of the African Union, has provided unswerving support to my country in the framework of resolving the Comorian crisis and laud it for its tireless commitment to providing us valuable support throughout our development process.

I reiterate our sincere gratitude to the Republic of South Africa, in its capacity as a coordinator country for the Comoros, in the framework of national reconciliation, for the tireless support it has provided my country. Let me specifically thank President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Mr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, for the assistance they have lent my country and for their readiness to co-chair the donors conference for the Comoros.

I hope that our work will be crowned with success, and I believe that our efforts will lead to a constructive outcome for us all, for our respective peoples, and for future generations.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Hugo Chávez Frías, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

President Chávez Frías (*spoke in Spanish*): The original aim of this meeting has been totally distorted. The central topic for debate that has been imposed on us is the so-called process of reform, which has relegated to the sidelines the most urgent issue -- what the peoples of the world are calling for urgently — which is the adoption of measures to deal with the real problems that are hampering our countries' efforts towards development and a better life.

Five years after the Millennium Summit, the harsh reality is that the great majority of the Goals that were set, modest as they were, will not be achieved. We had hoped to halve the number of people suffering from hunger — 842 million — by 2015. At the current rate of progress, this will be achieved only in the year 2215. I wonder who of us will be here to mark that occasion. That is, if the human race can actually survive the destruction threatening our environment.

We had proclaimed our aspiration to achieve by 2015 universal primary education. At the current rate of progress, that goal will be achieved only after the year 2100. So again, let us prepare to celebrate that.

This necessarily leads us to a bitter conclusion: that the United Nations has outgrown its model. It is not just a question of simple reform. The twenty-first century requires profound changes that will be possible only if the Organization is truly recast.

This is the reality of the situation. We believe that the changes to which Venezuela is referring involve two phases: the immediate phase, and that of dreams and utopia.

The first phase is marked by agreements that are weighed down by the old system. We do not shy away from this, and we have made specific short-term proposals within this model. However, the dream of world peace, of a "we the peoples" not burdened by the shame of hunger, disease, illiteracy and extreme want, not only needs roots; it also needs wings in order to fly.

We know that there is a terrifying neo-liberal globalization afoot; but there is also the reality of an interconnected world. We need to look at this, not as a problem, but as a challenge. On the basis of our respective national realities, we can exchange knowledge, complement one another and integrate our markets. But at the same time we have to understand that there are problems that still do not have a national solution: neither a radioactive cloud, nor world prices, nor a pandemic, nor global warming nor the hole in the ozone layer are national problems.

As we move towards a new model for the United Nations, one that will solidly espouse the concept of "we, the peoples", there are four urgent and essential reform proposals that we bring to this Assembly. The first is the expansion of the Security Council, in both

the permanent and the non-permanent categories; this would allow entry to new countries, developed and developing, as new permanent members.

The second is the much-needed improvement of the working methods in such a way as to increase transparency and not to reduce it; to increase respect and not to diminish it; and to increase inclusion.

The third is the immediate removal — and Venezuela has been saying this now for six years — of the veto in the decisions of the Security Council. This elitist remnant of the past is incompatible with the very idea of equality and of democracy.

Finally, the role of the Secretary-General must be strengthened. His political functions in the framework of preventive diplomacy should be enhanced.

The seriousness of the problems calls for deep-rooted change. Reforms on their own will not be enough to restore the "we" hoped for by the peoples of the world. Beyond reforms, we in Venezuela are asking for a recasting of the United Nations. As we in Venezuela know very well from the words of Caracas's Simón Rodríguez, known also as Samuel Robinson, "either we invent or we err".

In January 2005, we attended a meeting of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Various personalities there called for United Nations Headquarters to leave the United States if that country continued to violate international law. Today we know that there were never weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The American people have always been very rigorous in demanding the truth from their leaders, as have the people of the world. There were never weapons of mass destruction. However, in spite of this, and going over the head of the United Nations, Iraq was bombed and occupied, and it continues to be occupied. That is why we propose to this Assembly that the United Nations leave a country that does not respect the very resolutions of this Assembly. Some proposals have suggested the alternative of a Jerusalem converted into an international city. That proposal has the merit of offering a response to the conflict experienced by Palestine, but it may be too thorny and difficult an idea to bring about.

In this respect, we have another proposal, as enshrined in the "Letter from Jamaica", written by Simón Bolívar, the great liberator of the South, in 1815, 190 years ago. Bolívar proposed the creation of an international city that would serve as capital for the unified entity he was putting forward. He was a dreamer, and his dreams are our present realities. We feel it is time to think about the creation of an international city under the sovereignty of no State, possessing the moral force to represent the nations of the world. But that international city must balance five centuries of imbalance. The new headquarters of the United Nations will have to be in the South. In the words of Uruguayan poet Mario Benedetti, "the South too exists".

This city, which may already exist, or which could be invented, could be at the crossroads of several borders or it could be in a territory symbolizing the world. Our continent can offer the land for building the balanced universe of which Bolívar spoke in 1825.

Today we are facing an unprecedented energy crisis, where we see the dangerous combination of an unstoppable increase in energy consumption, the inability to increase the supply of hydrocarbons and the prospect of a decline in proven reserves of fossil fuels. Oil is starting to run out. By 2020, the daily demand for oil will be 120 million barrels. Without even taking into account future growth, this would mean that in a period of 20 years we will consume as much oil as humanity has consumed to the present time. This will inevitably mean an increase in the emissions of carbon dioxide that, as we know, are increasing the Earth's temperature every day.

Hurricane Katrina has been a sad, painful example of the consequences brought when man ignores these realities. The warming of the oceans is the main reason for the devastating increase in the force of hurricanes that we have seen in recent years. Once again, we would like to express our sympathy and condolences to the people of the United States, which is also a fraternal people among the peoples of America and the world at large.

In both practical and ethical terms, it is inadmissible to sacrifice the human race by madly invoking a socio-economic model whose destructive capacity is dramatically rising. It is suicidal to insist on disseminating that model and imposing it as an infallible remedy for evils of which it is actually the main cause.

A short while ago, the President of the United States attended a meeting of the Organization of American States, and he proposed to Latin America

and the Caribbean an increase in trade measures and the opening up of markets. In other words, he proposed neo-liberalism, when that is precisely the basic cause of the great evils and tragedies that our peoples are experiencing. It is neo-liberal capitalism — the Washington consensus — that has increased dire poverty and inequality and that has caused the infinite tragedy of the peoples of this continent.

Today, more than ever, we need a new international order. Let us remember that the General Assembly, at its sixth special session, held in 1974 — some in this Hall had not even been born or were just toddlers, I am sure — 31 years ago, adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order (resolution 3201 (S-VI) and 3202 (S-VI)). In addition, the Assembly adopted, on 14 December of that same year, 1974, the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (resolution 3281 (XXIX)), which defined the new international economic order, and which was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 120 in favour to 6 against, with 10 abstentions.

That was at a time when we voted in the United Nations, because now there is no voting: now, we adopt documents, such as this outcome document that on behalf of Venezuela I denounce as illegal, null and void. It was approved in violation of the rules of the United Nations. This document is not a valid document. We will have to discuss this document. The Government of Venezuela is going to make this document known to the world. But we cannot accept open and brazen dictatorship in the United Nations. These matters must be discussed; and that is why I respectfully appeal to my fellow heads of State or Government represented here.

I just met with President Néstor Kirchner of Argentina, and I pulled out the document. This document was delivered to our delegates at five minutes' notice, in English only. And it was approved with a dictator's hammer. I denounce it before the world; it is illegitimate, null and void. If we are going to accept this, then we are lost. Let us just turn off the lights and close the doors and windows. The last thing we should do is to accept dictatorship here in this Hall.

As I was saying, now more than ever we need to take up again what we have left unfinished, including the proposal adopted by this Assembly in 1974 for a new international economic order. Article 2 of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (resolution 3281 (XXIX)) confirms the right of States to nationalize any property or natural resources in the hands of foreign investors, and proposes the creation of cartels of raw-material producers. In resolution 3201 (S-VI) of May 1974 the Assembly expressed its determination "to work urgently for the establishment of a new international economic order based on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and cooperation among all States, irrespective of their economic and social systems". This order would "correct inequalities and redress existing injustices ... between the developed and the developing countries and ensure steadily accelerating economic development and peace and justice for present and future generations". The aim of the new international economic order was to change the old economic order established at Bretton Woods.

I think that the President of the United States spoke for 20 minutes here yesterday, according to what I have been told. So I would ask the Assembly's indulgence so that I can finish my statement.

The aim of the new international economic order was to change the old economic order established at Bretton Woods in 1944, which was to remain in effect until 1971 and the collapse of the international monetary system. Just good intentions, but no will to follow through. However, we feel that that is still the path to be followed. Today, the people, and in this case the people of Venezuela, are calling for a new international economic order. But we also need a new international political order. We cannot allow a handful of countries to attempt to reinterpret with impunity the principles of international law in order to introduce a doctrine such as preventive war — it is enough that they threaten us with preventive war — and the so-called responsibility to protect. We need to ask ourselves, who is going to protect us and how are they going to protect us?

I think that one of the peoples requiring protection is the people of the United States, as has been painfully evident during the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina. They do not have a government that protects them from natural disasters that are foreseen, if we are talking about protecting each other. These are very dangerous concepts smacking of imperialism and interventionism and trying to legalize lack of respect for the sovereignty of countries. The principles of international law and the United Nations Charter

should be the cornerstone of international relations in today's world and the basis for the new international order that we are proposing.

Allow me once again as I move towards my conclusion to quote Simón Bolívar, our liberator. When he speaks about the integration of the world and the world parliament, a congress of parliamentarians, we should look at many of his proposals, such as the Bolivarian.

As Bolívar said in Jamaica in 1815 (I would like to read a sentence from his letter from Jamaica): "How beautiful it would be if the Isthmus of Panama could be for us what the Isthmus of Corinth was for the Greeks! Would to God that some day we may have the good fortune to convene there an august assembly of representatives of republics, kingdoms and empires to discuss the noble interests of peace and war with the nations of the other three parts of the world. This type of organization may come to pass in some happier period of our regeneration".

I urge members to face effectively, of course, international terrorism, but not to use that as an excuse for unleashing unjustified military aggression that violates international law and that has been enthroned as a doctrine since 11 September. Only close and real cooperation and an end to the double standards which several countries in the North apply to the subject of terrorism can eliminate this terrible scourge.

In just seven years, the Bolivarian revolution and the people of Venezuela have been able to accomplish important social and economic progress. Out of a total of approximately 25 million people, 1,406,000 Venezuelans have learned to read and write in one and a half years. In a few weeks, we shall be able to declare our country free from illiteracy. Three million Venezuelans previously marginalized by poverty have benefited from primary, secondary and university education. Almost 70 per cent of the population, 17 million people, for the first time in our history have been given free health care, including medication. Within a few years, all Venezuelans will have free access to excellent medical care. Today, we provide more than 1,700,000 tons of food at modest prices to 12 million people, almost half of all Venezuelans. One million of them receive this free of charge as a transitional measure. This has led to a high level of food security for those that need it the most.

We have created more than 700,000 jobs, reducing unemployment by nine percentage points. All this in the midst of internal and external aggression — including a military coup paid for by Washington and an oil coup also paid for by Washington — and in spite of conspiracies and calumnies on the past of the media and the permanent threat of the Empire and its allies, including incitement to assassinate a head of State. The only country where a person can freely ask for another head of State to be assassinated is the United States. This happened recently when a preacher called Pat Robertson, a very close friend of the White House, publicly asked for my assassination; he remains a free man. This is an international crime, international terrorism. Well, we shall fight for Venezuela, for Latin American integration and for the world. Here in this room, we declare our infinite faith in man, who longs for peace and justice in order to survive as a species.

Simón Bolívar, our liberator and the guide of our revolution, swore that he would not rest until he saw America free. Let us not rest in body or in soul until we have saved humanity.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The problem with long speeches is that this will be a late evening for many of you. But I suppose many of you are prepared for it. The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

President Vázquez (*spoke in Spanish*): As we say in our small, beautiful and beloved country, it is difficult for a capricorn to pitch his ideas following a speech by President Chávez Frías, to use a metaphor borrowed from the zodiac. I will certainly do my best.

On behalf of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, I congratulate The Co-Chairpersons on convening this High-level Plenary Meeting, and I greet the participating delegations. I also wish to express our gratitude for the report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), which is to serve as a reference point for this Meeting.

The Eastern Republic of Uruguay reaffirms its adherence to and unconditional respect for international law and the United Nations Charter. It is only on the basis of such respect and the repudiation of all unilateral or collective action that violates international law and global multilateralism that we can ensure international peace and security.

The preamble of the Charter of the United Nations states that "We the peoples of the United Nations" are determined "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom". Those wise and visionary words provide a broad and essential conception of freedom, including the well-being of the individual and the advancement of society. Without such broad principles, the idea of liberty would be unacceptably circumscribed and peace and security would be mortgaged by a lack of social guarantees.

There is no freedom in poverty. Poverty is not just ethically inadmissible; its very existence endangers democracy at home and peace abroad. That is why the fight against individual, national and governmental poverty must be the first international and domestic priority, expressed through specific and urgent actions and initiatives, because the poor of the world cannot afford the luxury of waiting.

The Uruguayan Government, which took power on 1 March, is implementing a comprehensive plan to combat domestic poverty that calls for the adoption, in solidarity and with respect, of international decisions and efforts to eliminate that global scourge, which punishes many and heaps shame on us all.

Poverty is very often linked to corruption and the siphoning off of development funds. That is why we must also battle corruption with the same resolve with which we need to fight terrorism and poverty domestically and internationally. Similarly, universal respect for human rights is another priority and the guarantee of a dignified life for every human being and of a more prosperous humankind.

Terrorism is another scourge. It is an inhuman undertaking that must be repudiated and is incompatible with tolerance and the search for justice through democracy and freedom. Without prejudice to addressing the causes of terrorism, injustice, discrimination, the denial of human rights, the flouting of the rights of peoples, and obliviousness to the positive nature of cultural diversity, the fight against and punishment of terrorism are an unshirkable national and international duty.

International cooperation, the improvement of existing instruments and, above all, their full application in good faith and respect for international and humanitarian law, must be enhanced and strengthened. To that end, Uruguay reaffirms its commitment to the fight against terrorism.

This High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly must establish a plan for the effective reform of the United Nations Charter, which, pursuant to the wishes of the international community and the needs of today's world, must be updated. I cannot refer to all the aspects of such essential reform, but wish to focus on two that are especially important to Uruguay.

First, we agree that we should increase the number of seats on the Security Council. Moreover, Uruguay has always questioned the existence of the right of veto. Although the conditions for its elimination do not now exist, our country, consistent with its historical position, cannot support any expansion of a right that it has always considered unjust and therefore cannot agree that any new member of the Council resulting from its expansion should enjoy the right of veto.

Secondly, Uruguay endorses the establishment of a human rights council as a principal organ of the United Nations made up of members designated by the General Assembly. Replacing the current Commission on Human Rights, it must enjoy powers commensurate with its new nature and serve as a coordination focal point for the promotion and protection of international human rights.

The Government and citizens of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay are committed to supporting the United Nations and its work to promote international peace and security based on justice and law. With that commitment, born of a history that propels us forward and a future that summons us as a nation, we address this Meeting of heads of State and Government to share with the citizens of the world our hopes and the challenges and tasks that lie ahead.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic.

President Bongo Ondimba (*spoke in French*): With the Millennium Summit, the Monterrey Conference and the Johannesburg Summit in particular, the international community has laid the necessary foundations for eradicating poverty throughout the world.

My country, Gabon, has endorsed those commitments. It has therefore begun the reform necessary to attain the objectives that were set forth.

T'e reforms address areas that are as varied as improving public finance, administrative reform, privatization, good governance and transparency. They also involve creating the necessarv conditions for developing the private sector, which creates jobs and drives development.

In soc.ial terms, although it is not considered to be a heavily indebted poor country, Gabon has prepared a poverty reduction and growth strategy paper. At the same time, we need to acknowledge that, while considerable efforts have been taken in the areas of public housing, rural water supply, basic education and primary health care, much remains to be done.

In addition, my country is firmly committed to fight AIDS, in particular with free care for the poorest among the sick, and by building outpatient treatment centres throughout the country.

Cleaning up public finances, diversifying the economy and undertaking thorough reform will not be sufficient to achieve the Millennium Goals. Putting order in public investment policy will not yield results if the budget is unable to allocate sufficient resources to priority sectors. That is the case in Gabon today, with debt repayment eating up 45 per cent of our public resources every year.

We therefore need an appropriate plan for our debt. Without this my country will not be able comprehensively and sustainably to meet the challenges it is facing.

Yet, we have a number of assets to create a partnership that will provide development and progress. Among them, by way of illustration, I would include those related to the environment and biodiversity. Thirteen national parks have been created, comprising 10 per cent of our national territory, and are available and ready to be brought to the fore as part of the diversification of our economy.

I therefore call on all the members of the donor community to pay particular attention to the case of middle-income indebted countries, such as Gabon.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mathieu Kérékou, President and Head of the Government of the Republic of Benin.

President Kérékou (*spoke in French*): Five years ago the international community adopted the Millennium Development Goals. This High-level Plenary Meeting provides us with an opportunity to assess progress made in the implementation of those Goals.

Today, new challenges have emerged that require our Organization, after 60 years in existence, to undertake reform with courage and determination. The implementation of those reforms should enable our common institution to be more effective, more credible and better adapted to the realities of our time.

In that connection, we pay a well-deserved tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, for having submitted robust proposals to us, laying out guidelines for promoting the long-awaited qualitative changes.

If there is one area where United Nations action needs to be considerably strengthened, it is the area of promoting development. Development challenges are especially urgent for the group of least developed countries, the most vulnerable link in the international community. Quantifiable, targeted commitments have been undertaken with a specific timetable for those countries. We need to acknowledge that implementation of those commitments falls far short of the outcomes that had been anticipated.

As Chair of the Least Developed Countries Global Coordination Bureau, we issue a new appeal to the international community — particularly to our development partners and to the institutions of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions — to support preparations for the mid-term review of the Brussels Programme of Action by the General Assembly at its sixty-first session in 2006.

It is necessary that the international community continue its efforts to maintain international peace and security. However, the concept of a threat to peace and security needs to be redefined and restated in order to prevent certain abuses of a kind that we have seen in recent years. For Benin, the non-use of unilateral force in international relations needs to continue to be a fundamental principle of our system of collective security. That is why regional organizations henceforth need to play an increased role in issues related to maintaining peace and security. They therefore need to build upon their capacity to take action in the area of conflict resolution. We call upon the international community to firmly support the African Union's efforts to that end.

It has become necessary to establish the Peacebuilding Commission to capitalize on the progress made in the area of support for countries emerging from conflict or crisis. The international community must strengthen its action in the fight against the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts. Following the adoption, on 26 July 2005, of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) on such worrisome situations, it is now essential to give the international community the tool it needs to halt the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts. That is why Benin proposes that a discussion be held in the context of a General Assembly working group to reclassify the scourge of child soldiers as a crime against humanity instead of as a war crime.

Respecting, protecting and promoting basic freedoms and human rights, including the right to development, are of paramount importance at all levels. The Secretary-General has made interesting proposals in this area aimed at transforming the Commission on Human Rights into a human rights council. Whatever the form of the new structure might be, the objective is to ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights by all the world's citizens on an objective, non-discriminatory and non-selective basis.

Therefore, this is the time and the place to reaffirm our trust in the United Nations, which is undoubtedly the only universal forum for cooperation among States. Benin also places legitimate hopes in the vast undertaking of institutional reform of the Organization, including redefining the functions of the Economic and Social Council, streamlining the work of the General Assembly and expanding the Security Council. Specifically with regard to expanding the Council and revising its working methods, we must finally offer Africa just representation that takes into account the number of African States and the specific nature of African issues.

We are at a critical stage in the history of humanity. We have no right to fail in the quest for lasting solutions to our common challenges. We are convinced that the skill with which the Co-Chairpersons are presiding over this summit is already an indication that our work will lead to concrete results that meet the expectations of our peoples.

Finally, we should like to express our highest appreciation to Mr. Jean Ping, outgoing President of the General Assembly, for his excellent work in preparing for the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Arnold Rüütel, President of the Republic of Estonia.

President Rüütel (*spoke in Estonian; English text provided by the delegation*): Today's world poses new challenges for the international community and for the United Nations. Five years ago, world leaders gathered at the Millennium Summit to agree on the main development goals for the twenty-first century. Today, we are here to have a midterm review of the implementation of those goals, to set new goals for the future and to take decisive steps to make the United Nations a more efficient Organization.

Estonia welcomes the draft summit outcome (A/60/L.1), because it gives us guidelines for the future. I believe that our discussion will lay the foundation for necessary reforms of the United Nations system and for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

I believe that perhaps the most significant issue we are considering at the summit is cooperation to reduce the gaps between the various development levels of the world's nations. We consider it extremely important to speed up the process aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, we must further deepen global partnerships and cooperation, increase official development assistance and ensure its more effective use.

We are convinced that cooperation can be effective only if the countries benefiting from it feel that they own its results. We believe that the primary responsibility for development lies with countries themselves. Strengthening national governance, fighting corruption and better regulating the economic environment are significant prerequisites for enhancing the impact and effectiveness of development assistance. If such assistance is to bear fruit, it must be based on local needs and on sufficiently ambitious national development strategies elaborated by the recipient countries themselves.

World peace and stability are also important preconditions for development. United Nations peacekeeping, to which Estonia has contributed consistently over the years, has an important role to

play in that regard. But countries emerging from conflict also need more international attention and assistance to ensure their development and to prevent the recurrence of conflict. Estonia therefore supports the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, which is to be one of the summit's outcomes. We hope that we will soon see the results of its work.

As recent terrorist attacks in the world have shown, terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Here, Estonia's position is very clear: there can be no justification for terrorism. We are firmly convinced that terrorism can be fought effectively only through close international cooperation that complies with international law. We therefore believe that it is essential to adopt a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. I am pleased to have signed yesterday, on Estonia's behalf, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which is a significant step forward in developing the legal framework for anti-terrorist cooperation.

We are convinced that development and security goals cannot be achieved without ensuring the protection of human rights. We believe that the United Nations mechanism for protecting human rights must have the capacity to carry out that responsibility more effectively. Estonia also considers the strengthening of the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and of her Office, as well as an agreement on the funding of the Office and closer cooperation between the High Commissioner and the rest of the United Nations system, to be a very important part of United Nations reform.

It is noteworthy that we were able to reach agreement on the principle of the responsibility to protect. Of course, each country has the primary responsibility for protecting its own people. However, it is also important that we do everything possible at the international level to prevent genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. It is crucial to ensure that such crimes will not go unpunished. Here, Estonia supports the work of the International Criminal Court.

Estonia remains committed to making a contribution by sharing its experience in establishing democratic institutions and engaging civil society. We also consider the establishment of a Democracy Fund to be important so as to provide support to nations for democratic development.

The protection of the rights of women and children deserves special attention, as does the protection of the rights of indigenous people. We sincerely hope that the process of drafting the declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples will be completed in the near future.

The efficient performance of the United Nations is crucial for peace, stability and development throughout the world. Our world has changed in recent decades; new threats and challenges have emerged that make it imperative for us to strengthen and improve the Organization. That, in turn, requires institutional reform and better coherence throughout the entire United Nations system.

Estonia believes that the capacity of the United Nations to protect human rights is one of the main pillars of the Organization's credibility. That is why we support the speedy creation of a permanent Human Rights Council. We believe, however, that it is equally important for that Council to have the necessary status and competence to enable it to effectively protect human rights.

I believe that we can carry out the tasks that are before us; that during this session of the General Assembly we will take a significant step towards achieving the goals that we have set; and that we will also manage to carry out the necessary reforms.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines.

President Macapagal-Arroyo: The mantra of the United Nations on its sixtieth anniversary is the Millennium Development Goals. However, the process of implementing those goals is in danger of unravelling. Why? Because of terrorism, the energy crisis and the debt burden of developing countries.

On the debt burden, we applaud debt relief for the highly indebted poor countries. But there are also many middle-income countries that are highly indebted and have large populations that survive on less than $1 a day. In such cases, we propose a large-scale, 50 per cent conversion of debt for Millennium Development Goals (MDG) anti-poverty financing programmes. We are not asking for debt forgiveness or debt cancellation. What we propose is that the debt service or principal amount should be converted into equities in new

projects of at least equal value and with their own potential earnings. I hope that this debt-for-MDG proposal will find its way into the summit outcome and that the Paris Club, the Governments of the Group of Eight countries, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the regional development banks and the world's large commercial banks will approve it.

We are offering this option amidst the energy crunch. On the energy crisis, we propose that the United Nations take the lead in collective action to ease the effects of oil prices. For instance, the collective development of alternative and indigenous energy sources could include converting cane sugar to ethanol or obtaining diesel oil from coconuts. Wind farms and rural solar energy projects could be set up. Collective oil rationing, energy conservation and regional stockpiling could also be considered.

In addition, there could be collective efforts to intensify oil and gas exploration, similar to the cooperative seismic operations that China, Viet Nam and the Philippines started last August in areas of the South China Sea that they claim competitively.

We also call on the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to recycle petrodollars and extraordinary profits from the oil trade in the form of equity investments and long-term, low-interest loans to medium and poor oil-importing States. We feel justified in making this call, because our overseas Filipinos contribute tremendously to the economies of the petroleum-exporting countries.

Our overseas Filipinos — 8 million of them — are the reason why we sponsored the inclusion of migration in the outcome document of this High-level Plenary Meeting, as well as the holding of a high-level dialogue on migration and development. We are determined to leverage an effective global consensus to protect the rights and welfare of overseas Filipinos, including protecting them against global terrorism.

On terrorism, the Philippines reaffirms its commitment to fight this terrible evil. As the Secretary-General said in Madrid last March, terrorism is a threat to all States and to all people. Like many countries, the Philippines has been struck by the pain of terror. But we have fought back with the vigilance of ordinary citizens, a strong bilateral and regional security network, the tools of interfaith dialogue and our strategic alliance with the United States. Our peace process is perhaps the only one in the world that incorporates an anti-terrorism component. Our ceasefire agreement with the rebels in southern Philippines includes the interdiction of terrorist cells.

In the fight against terrorism, interfaith dialogue has gained legitimacy as a serious alternative approach to conflict. Religions are the bedrock of cultures and civilizations. Religions must be respected as we pursue development. We expect the United Nations to be sensitive to the deep Catholicism of the vast majority of the Filipino people. The funding given by the United Nations to our national Government for reproductive health will be dedicated to training married couples in a natural family planning technology which the World Health Organization has found effective compared with artificial contraceptives.

The Population Council of New York has found that artificial contraception contributes only 2 per cent to the decline of birth rates, while the combination of improving the economic condition of the family, urbanization and breastfeeding contributes 98 per cent. Thus we ask the United Nations and donor countries to direct their assistance towards the improvement of family productivity and income.

The vastness of our challenges — the deepening cut of poverty, the relentless surge of terrorism, the burgeoning debt problem and the soaring price of oil — bids us find courage in our solidarity. On the occasion of this sixtieth jubilee, we reaffirm the role of the United Nations as the primary instrument of that solidarity.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Tassos Papadopoulos, President of the Republic of Cyprus.

President Papadopoulos: Sixty years after the end of the Second World War, which brought untold sorrow to mankind, the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly has rightly gathered here an unprecedented number of heads of State or Government to mark a historic event. It is a mark of esteem for the 60 years of firm resolution of all the peoples of the United Nations to combine their efforts to accomplish the noble aims enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and it is a mark of renewal of a sixty-year commitment to an international order based on the rule of law. We must seize this opportunity to take stock of the progress in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and revitalize the consensus

on new and old challenges, which need urgent collective action.

In this respect, allow me first to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his inspired report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005) and Mr. Jean Ping, President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, for the leadership and outstanding ability with which he guided the work of preparation for this meeting.

More than ever, today, the world needs a strong United Nations if we are to successfully confront the many challenges we all face and are to honour longstanding commitments, as last reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration. In the five years that have followed the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and our jubilation at the beginning of a new millennium, the world has witnessed unprecedented ruthless terrorist attacks and a severe crisis in our Organization.

The Republic of Cyprus believes that the United Nations remains the cardinal expression of effective multilateralism and a unique framework for the development of an international system based on clear and foreseeable rules.

It is incumbent upon us at this historic juncture to agree on joint actions for the much-needed reform of our Organization and to give it a restored purpose. That can be achieved through the adoption of a comprehensive and action-oriented strategy. Equal weight and attention should be given to development, peace and security, and human rights. We firmly believe that the strengthening of the rule of law, at both the national and international levels, is an essential element for the successful achievement of those goals. Adherence to commonly agreed rules and trust in the system's ability to prevent or sanction the violation of those rules are underlying principles of effective multilateralism.

In a world where more than a billion people, in particular in Africa, face extreme poverty and hunger and live in miserable conditions, our fundamental responsibility is to declare in a credible way that development is a central issue on the agenda of the United Nations. We urgently need to move from rhetoric to action, because the gap between the haves and the have-nots is widening dramatically instead of narrowing. We need to honour past commitments and take concrete measures to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Cyprus, as a State member of the European Union, fully subscribes to the statement delivered earlier by the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union and will play its part by increasing its official development assistance, in accordance with the relevant European Union decisions.

The United Nations should be empowered to deal effectively with the changing nature of threats to collective security, such as terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and transnational crime, while not forgetting the settlement of old disputes. Detecting the seeds of conflict at an early stage and preventing conflicts should become the cornerstone of our collective security.

The Security Council, which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should reinforce the fundamental obligation of Member States under the Charter to refrain from the threat or use of force and to avoid aggression. The Republic of Cyprus, which has suffered from the use of force and foreign aggression and is still suffering from occupation, firmly believes that we need to reform the Security Council in order to reinforce its credibility and legitimacy, through, inter alia, the improvement of its working methods and its decision-making procedures. Securing efficiency in the implementation of its resolutions remains an absolute necessity. In fact, our Organization will be as strong and as effective as its membership wishes or allows it to be.

Even though the 60-year legacy of the United Nations human rights programme is impressive and provides a wide-ranging body of norms and standards, today the system for protecting human rights at the international level is under considerable strain. The current United Nations human rights institutional framework faces considerable problems in the implementation of those norms and standards. The mainstreaming of human rights in the entire United Nations system has yet to be achieved. The respect and the promotion of the human rights of all people, in particular internally displaced persons, refugees and missing persons, are of vital importance to Cyprus.

In an era of globalization and interdependence, in which global challenges require global responses and concerted action, we ought to send a signal in no

uncertain terms that the clash of civilizations will simply not take place, because we all share a universal civilization, which is based on a belief in mankind, as encapsulated in the United Nations Charter. The Charter remains our common and unique political, legal and moral compass.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency The Honourable Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

President Kumaratunga: At the outset, I extend our sympathy and solidarity to the people and the Government of the United States of America as they begin reconstruction and rehabilitation, following the recent hurricane disaster on the Gulf Coast. We do so while recalling the generous and spontaneous response of the peoples and the Governments of so many States Members of the United Nations, including the United States, as well as that of the United Nations and other international agencies, when the tsunami waves struck Sri Lanka last December.

I had the honour to deliver my first address to the Assembly in my capacity as President of Sri Lanka at the historic session of 1995, when the United Nations celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. It is therefore a distinct pleasure to revisit this forum ten years later, all the more so because this year we commemorate both the fiftieth anniversary of Sri Lanka's membership in the United Nations and the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. It is time to take stock and remain focused, with a view to moving forward. We have a substantial unfinished agenda and new challenges to deal with.

The United Nations is the most representative universal body in which to legitimately seek common solutions to common problems that are acceptable to our diverse membership.

As recognized by the High-level Panel and by the Secretary-General in his report, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), the United Nations, despite its many achievements, and because of its great potential, has to do more to keep pace with the changes that have occurred in the world since its inception 60 years ago. Reform of the United Nations must be in the multilateral interest and embrace all facets of United Nations activities.

The vision that we will adopt at this summit should, indeed, be decisive. It should serve as a road map to catalyse further change and reform. Reform must affect our entire agenda, the mechanisms we adopt to implement it and the resources we make available. It cannot be piecemeal, and it must benefit all Member States equitably. An integrated approach to security, development and human rights is the key to that.

Allow me to revisit an issue of current significance — global terrorism, which was taken up both in 1995 and at the Millennium Summit in 2000 — on which action remains pending internationally, even as we in Sri Lanka are trying out an integrated approach to resolving our problem in the face of great challenge.

More than 10 years ago, my Government launched a bold policy of negotiated settlement in place of conflict, and opted for a federal solution, as against a separate State, as demanded by the rebels. With the support of a broad multi-ethnic coalition of parties, I proceeded to talk with the rebel armed group — the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) — about ending the conflict, and discussed with all the parties in parliament a new, more inclusive, political Constitution that would share power with all communities. That policy shift laid the groundwork for a new approach to fighting terrorism and to the peace process in my country that simultaneously addressed security, development and human rights.

We engaged the rebels in a ceasefire that we hoped would save lives and allow people, particularly those living in the conflict-affected areas, to live and work more freely. That, we believed, would have a positive influence on the overall climate for peace, thus improving security. We increased development work in conflict-affected areas because we believed that all of our citizens, irrespective of where they live, what ethnic group they belong to, or even what authority they are forced to live under, must have access to health, education and jobs. We believed that that would give the LTTE — the rebel group — an opportunity to engage in useful and constructive work that could benefit the people directly, rather than preparing for conflict.

We took a number of steps to improve the human rights of all the people of the country, with a special

focus on the concerns of ethnic communities that have not been fully included in the past.

As part of the peace process, successive Governments have given the LTTE all facilities as a party to negotiations, including access to foreign entities and Governments — at times using the good offices of the facilitators, the Norwegian Government, who have made considerable efforts to move the process forward under difficult circumstances. However, that process of engagement and accommodation does not seem to have persuaded that group to move away from terrorism, as evidenced by their recent killing of my Foreign Minister, their continued recruitment of child soldiers and their killings of political rivals.

Such actions of an armed group engaged in a peace process tests the commitment of a vast majority of the people of the country to pursuing a negotiated settlement. Although we had the option of a military response, we rejected it, choosing instead a different approach. We have reiterated our commitment to a ceasefire and a political solution, while reviewing the previous approach to negotiating with that group. That review has begun with a call to the international community to help exert real pressure on the LTTE with a view to engaging them in a process that leads to lasting peace, bringing about democracy and human rights.

The challenge we face in Sri Lanka is not unique. Vulnerable democracies that have undertaken bold, political initiatives to address the root causes of terrorism and seek political solutions by engaging with ruthless armed groups find themselves in a genuine dilemma as to how to develop a credible and acceptable approach to such negotiations.

If a democratic State, which consistently conforms to international norms and laws and uses non-military means to address the problem of terrorism, grows weak as a result of the activities of terrorists, chaos and lawlessness will follow. Extremism, fundamentalism and tribalism will reign supreme. As a result, peace and security, within and among States, as well as universally accepted human rights norms and fundamental freedoms, will suffer. It will also lead to the weakening of the intergovernmental system, which is the bedrock of this Organization. The intergovernmental system chain can only be as strong as its weakest link. It is therefore essential to strengthen the collective ability of the system to combat and address terrorism.

In this regard, we must be absolutely clear that contacts with armed non-State actors in the interest of peacemaking should not be at the expense of the capability for democratic governance of a sovereign State that is conducting itself according to internationally accepted laws and norms. The United Nations and the international community can help in developing mechanisms that support States engaging in such peace processes and impose sanctions on the terrorist groups that undermine them.

It is therefore timely for the Assembly to address the question of practical means to deny external access and support to such entities to sustain their military and fund-raising activities, which are detrimental to ongoing peace processes. We hope that the mechanisms already put in place by the Security Council against such offending non-State actors will eventually represent an effective deterrent against such activities. In the absence of such measures, those groups may continue to engage in illicit financing and arms procurement, while enjoying the political privileges gained through engagement in peace processes. That, in turn, will erode the credibility of all our peacemaking efforts, including those of the United Nations, as well as years of work in codifying international legal and other measures against terrorism.

Even with rebel groups engaged in peace processes, we must, on the one hand, adopt procedures that reward genuine peacemaking and, on the other, impose sanctions for acts of terrorism. Without that, vulnerable democracies will find it extremely difficult to launch and sustain effective negotiations with armed groups.

In his "In larger freedom" report, the Secretary-General correctly observes that a small network of non-State actors — terrorists — have created new challenges for the international community. The forces of globalization have aggravated that situation. Transnational networks of terrorist groups have acquired global reach and made common cause in posing threats to democracy, peace and security within, and among, States.

If we are to fight global terrorism, poverty and disease, we must take an integrated approach to security, human rights and development, both

nationally and internationally. We must act together as a United Nations system to support and strengthen States that are addressing those challenges comprehensively. This would form an essential part of the mission of the United Nations for the next decade.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Samuel Schmid, President of the Swiss Confederation.

President Schmid (*spoke in French*): Sixty years of the United Nations existence have proved that it is truly a universal Organization. There is no substitute for its framework for cooperation between the nations. It is the driving force behind efforts for development. And it is the promoter of peace and collective security. And yet, conflicts erupt and persist. The battle against famine and poverty must still be waged. Inequality and oppression remain a reality. That is why the United Nations is indispensable and must be equipped to rise to the challenges of our time.

In the draft outcome document we are to adopt, we recognize that human rights and democracy, peace and security and development are interdependent and that they constitute the very foundation of our security and well-being. They are the three pillars of the work of the United Nations. In that regard, I would like to express our gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to Mr. Jean Ping, President of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, for their efforts and commitment to this process.

My country expresses its satisfaction with regard to the establishment of the Human Rights Council. By establishing that Council, we should be able to adapt the architecture of the United Nations to make human rights as much a priority as development, peace and security. In Switzerland's view, that new body will have to be both more legitimate and more efficient, hold a higher place in the United Nations hierarchy than the current Commission on Human Rights and be based in Geneva. Switzerland is resolutely determined to pursue the efforts undertaken over the last few months in order to reach the ambitious goal the Assembly has set in this crucial area.

In order to achieve the task of maintaining peace and security, it is essential that we reaffirm our commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes. The use of force should remain the exception, and when it is used it should be in conformity with the inviolable principles of international law. There is also a need for us to better assume our responsibility to protect, individually as well as collectively, and to make every effort to define together the criteria for its implementation.

Furthermore, we welcome the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, which will be a new instrument to promote collective security, ensuring the interlinkage between the security of citizens, the re-establishment of the rule of law, humanitarian work and development. It is just as important that its composition be representative of the actual contributions of United Nations Members in those contexts.

We also feel that it is necessary that the Security Council become more representative and that its working methods be reformed with a view to increased transparency, in order to produce strengthened interaction with non-members of the Council.

Switzerland equally wishes to reaffirm here its support for peacekeeping operations and its commitment to the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. That commitment was strengthened by the signing of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which I had the honour to undertake yesterday.

Ensuring security also means respecting the law. It is therefore of the utmost importance to keep in mind that the crucial fight against terrorism should not be pursued at the expense of international law and respect for human rights.

Development is an essential component of security. That is why we unambiguously reaffirm here the commitments that we made at the Millennium Summit, and then reiterated at Monterrey and Johannesburg. Increased and coordinated efforts by all development partners — industrialized countries and developing countries alike, the public and private sectors, Governments and civil society — are needed if we are to attain these objectives by the deadlines set.

For Switzerland, there is but one development path to follow: that of sustainable development in the economic, social and environmental spheres.

Our natural-resource base is running out, and unless we hasten to focus far greater attention on its

preservation, particularly in the areas of climate and biodiversity, we will not achieve our development goals.

For nearly 30 years, Switzerland has been giving priority to the poorest countries when it comes to assistance. Today nearly half of our aid goes to Africa, a policy which we will resolutely maintain in the future. The aid we provide to developing countries is of high quality, and it is implemented in partnership with its beneficiaries.

However, coordination among the international aid system's actors must be further improved. In that context, Switzerland fully adheres to the Paris agenda on aid effectiveness and is convinced that harmonizing aid remains crucial to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Since the Monterrey Conference, Swiss official aid has grown continuously and today has reached the level we pledged at the Conference, allocating 0.41 per cent of its gross national income to official development assistance. Switzerland now ranks among the top 10 donors of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. Development aid will be one of the few items on our national budget which will grow in coming years, as it is set to increase by a further 8 per cent overall for the period 2005-2008. Switzerland will consider increasing its quota for development aid beyond 2008 in order to further enhance its role in international burden-sharing.

In closing, I wish to underline that the question of migration must be taken more seriously into consideration. In that regard, Switzerland expresses its commitment in the context of the Global Commission on International Migration in view of the 2006 high-level dialogue on migration and development.

As this is the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, allow me to conclude with a sport-related exhortation, with the wish that it might apply to the United Nations: "Faster, higher, stronger" — in other words, greater effectiveness, transparency and solidarity.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Alfred Moisiu, President of the Republic of Albania.

President Moisiu (*spoke in Albanian; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a special honour for me to address this summit, which, because of the important decisions that will be taken here and the broad participation of world leaders, represents a milestone in the history of the United Nations. This once-in-a-generation meeting entails for us an immense responsibility: to take decisions of global importance and to follow them up with global actions.

Albania has faith in the United Nations and in its important role in the international arena. We believe that an effective multilateral system is helpful in facing challenges and threats and that it ensures stable development and guarantees respect for human rights. We subscribe to the view that the United Nations is the key institution for translating into reality the values of multilateralism.

We believe that development is a priority and an objective in and of itself. We also value the importance of partnership in development. Developed and developing countries have a shared and urgent responsibility to transform that partnership into a success story, and all countries have an obligation to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

I am pleased to be able to state that Albania is today an active and trusted partner in the context of global cooperation and action. This is having a constructive and motivating impact on regional developments in South-East Europe. Albania is also making ongoing efforts to fulfil all of its international commitments.

The Albanian Government has endeavoured to integrate the MDGs into its main national strategies. That objective came into even clearer focus when the country's Assembly approved a resolution on the Millennium Declaration in July 2003.

Albania is a new democracy at the end of a transition period with very ambitious goals in the area of national development. Thus the Albanian Government, in collaboration with the international community, has elaborated a unification position document which harmonizes the development process and brings it into line with the provisions of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union and the National Strategy for Economic and Social Development, as well as with the Millennium Development Goals.

Albania fully embraces the spirit of the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus.

Terrorism poses a real threat to the international community. It knows no borders and it threatens us all; hence the response to it must be joint and at all levels. Albanian strongly condemns all types of terrorism. We believe that it is dangerous to wait. One does not need to become a victim of terrorism to grasp the full extent of the threat it poses. That is why we believe in and support international cooperation in fighting terrorism.

My country fully supports the powerful message of this summit as to the need to condemn terrorism and undertake concerted action to fight it. Albania appreciates and encourages the efforts being made to elaborate a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and supports its adoption during this session of the General Assembly. Albania believes that such an instrument would represent an important achievement in the context of the global efforts made by the United Nations to fight terrorism.

Albania attaches special significance to the issues of disarmament and of halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with a view to strengthening international security. The dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, their proliferation and the possibility of terrorists' acquiring them remain the greatest threats to international peace and security. We are ready to support firm language on this issue as well as to redouble our efforts to face such threats.

Albania is committed to implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Albania supports the initiative to create the Peacebuilding Commission as an important part of United Nations reform, in the belief that peacebuilding strategies form the core of all national reconstruction efforts.

Albania has accorded, and continues to accord, due attention to the respect of human rights in all its aspects. Albania has submitted to the relevant United Nations commissions six initial reports related to compliance with the provisions of the principal conventions in the area of human rights, and it is currently preparing to submit other periodical reports.

Albania believes that the creation of a Human Rights Council represents a core reform proposal at this summit. We believe that there is a need for better coordination and greater focus of the international community's efforts on promoting democracy and good governance. Albania comes to this summit with the firm resolve to endorse the move for the creation of a United Nations democracy fund.

The reform of the Security Council, a principal institution in the field of collective security and the protection of international peace, is an important step towards the foundation of a more representative, effective and transparent institution. To make such reform as stable as possible and to give proper legitimacy to the reformed Security Council in taking and implementing decisions, we believe that that the reform must enjoy broad consensus. We cannot fail to note that it will take time to achieve that goal, which should be acceptable to the majority of Member States. Any unjustifiable haste might lead to undesirable discord within the United Nations.

As a member of the Group of Eastern European States, which has almost doubled in size since 1991, Albania supports the proposal that any increase in the number of non-permanent seats on the Security Council must ensure an increased representation of that regional group, giving it at least one more non-permanent seat in the reformed Security Council.

In conclusion, allow me to express my conviction that this summit, with the large array of issues before it and with the prospects it opens for our universal Organization, will be remembered as the new Millennium Summit, worthy of the name of the United Nations.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Halldór Ásgrimsson, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iceland.

Mr. Ásgrimsson (Iceland): Next year will mark the sixtieth anniversary of Iceland's accession to the United Nations.

Newly independent in 1946, the Icelandic people sought the clear recognition of sovereignty which membership of the United Nations gives. The need to reinforce the country's security through membership of an Organization committed to maintaining peace and security in the world was also an important consideration.

The sovereign equality between nations provided by the United Nations Charter, the promise of living in peace as good neighbours, and the condemnation of the use of armed force except in the common interest — all those were valuable principles which the new Republic of Iceland wished to subscribe to.

But Iceland has never looked on the United Nations as a mechanism solely for safeguarding sovereignty and for mediating relations between Governments. The Charter addresses not only how we as Governments conduct our relations between ourselves, matters of sovereign equality and territorial integrity, but also how we conduct ourselves towards our own peoples — what the Secretary-General has called the accountability of States to their citizens — and indeed, how we conduct ourselves towards the peoples of other countries.

It is my view that, up to now, the key commitments to the peoples enshrined in the United Nations Charter have not been given their due weight. The text proposed for endorsement makes significant strides towards redressing the imbalance.

In particular, we have established the concept of the responsibility to protect. That idea is implicit in the United Nations Charter. It is therefore right that this summit underlines the responsibility that Governments have to their people and the duty of the international community to intervene in a timely and decisive manner if national authorities manifestly fail in their responsibilities.

With the creation of the human rights council, the United Nations will obtain a powerful tool in persuading States to live up to their responsibility to protect. It is in line with our decision to increase resources to the human rights machinery and will equip the United Nations to fulfil its duties towards its peoples, those individuals whose human rights need watchful and impartial protection. Work on that project must proceed rapidly.

The decision to establish a peacebuilding commission will provide another tool which will help to create a better future for individuals and nations. Iceland welcomes its foundation and believes that, if given the necessary institutional weight, it could achieve much in establishing lasting peace following conflict.

Large strides have been made on development matters. Still, there is far to go if we are to attain the Millennium Development Goals. The clear recognition of the particular problems of Africa is most welcome. The clear restatement of the fundamental responsibility and right of developing countries to conduct their own development, the importance of private investment capital, and the massive increase in direct development aid promised by developed nations is a major achievement.

The Doha round must also make significant progress towards creating an international trade regime that gives developing countries access to the globalized economy. Development assistance from developed countries has a vital role to play in the fight against poverty and injustice. But developing countries, with the help of the international community, need to create political and legal environments in which sustainable development has a real chance.

Iceland also welcomes the text on terrorism, although a universal definition is still needed. Terrorism is a threat to us all and must be condemned in all its forms. We therefore have a duty to conclude an international convention on terrorism by the end of this session of the General Assembly.

The United Nations has made a great difference to many, but it has also failed many. If we do not reform the Security Council, we will lack the necessary strength and power to protect and to secure and maintain peace. Iceland believes that, with the assistance of the President of the General Assembly, that matter can be settled before the end of the year.

Finally, we believe that Iceland can make a contribution to peace and to the welfare of all Member States. It is for that reason that Iceland is for the first time a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the term 2009-2010.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Sir Allan Kemakeza, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands.

Mr. Kemakeza (Solomon Islands): First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our deepest sympathy to the Government and people of the United States for the tragic loss of life and property resulting from the recent hurricane in the Gulf States.

Allow me to congratulate Ambassador Eliasson on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. Solomon Islands wish to assure him of our support during his term in office. I wish to also register, through him, my delegation's sincere appreciation to the outgoing President, Mr. Jean Ping, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Gabon, who has worked tirelessly with all members of this body in

addressing our fears and charting the future direction of this Organization.

Twenty-seven years ago, Solomon Islands joined this noble institution, believing in the principles and values it stands for. Unfortunately, this institution has not reconciled itself with the ever-changing environment. Countries such as Solomon Islands have slipped from being developing to being least developed and, most recently, into being vulnerable States.

Representing a country from a region identified as off-track in terms of meeting its Millennium Development Goals, my delegation is positive that this summit will revitalize our efforts towards achieving those Goals.

Development remains the most important pillar of the outcome document. Poverty reduction and socio-economic growth are achievable if global partnership is focused on the weak and vulnerable Members of the United Nations. It is the sick that need the doctor. In this case, it is the most vulnerable countries that should be the focus of all United Nations programmes. The growing number of least developed countries indicates that the world has taken a complex approach to dealing with the basic needs of the poorest of the poor. The outcome document shows that various development frameworks remain unsatisfactorily implemented. The Mauritius Strategy recently adopted by the General Assembly, as well as the upcoming review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the least developed countries, provide an opportunity to kick-start and redefine future cooperation between States with renewed commitment.

The Millennium Development Goals are multidimensional, multisectoral and interdependent. They cannot be unilaterally achieved. A genuine partnership between developed and developing countries is key to achieving the Goals. With the assistance of our development partners, Solomon Islands is working towards achieving, amongst other Millennium Development Goals, universal primary education, improved maternal health, better sanitation and clean water supply, and, of course, the eradication of malaria.

More than 90 per cent of today's conflicts occur within States; more than half originate in least developed countries. Solomon Islands welcomes the establishment of the peacebuilding council. The Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) represents North-South and South-South cooperation. RAMSI's success in creating an environment conducive to peace has given our people the opportunity to rebuild their lives and foster a secure and peaceful future.

Solomon Islands is committed to addressing past harmful economic policies, including the lack of fiscal discipline and good governance. The country requires human and physical capital to raise productivity and achieve sustained growth. In order to attract and build capital, my Government is initiating a strategy to establish a stable macroeconomic environment. That includes creating friendly tax and regulatory regimes and improving infrastructure.

Solomon Islands' debt level remains crippling. Work is under way to develop a comprehensive debt strategy. Meanwhile, we welcome the proposal by the President of the Philippines to have debts converted into Millennium Development Goal projects. Solomon Islands calls on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to further explore that proposal.

Over the years, Solomon Islands has consistently called for Security Council reform. The Council must be more representative, democratic, transparent and accountable. It should also reflect the current geopolitical realities. After years of debate, we understand how difficult it is to get a consensus on that matter. It is our hope that the expansion of the Security Council will ensure a stronger focus on matters of interest to small island developing States. Solomon Islands supports Japan, Germany, India and Brazil's bids for permanent seats within the Council.

Much has been said about the challenges and opportunities of globalization. While terrorism remains a global concern, the United Nations must continue to address its development agenda. In that regard, the Doha Development Round should offer concrete proposals for all States, including the least developed countries.

It is unfortunate that the United Nations continues to deny the right of the 23 million people of the Republic of China to have a voice in this forum. Taiwan is a major player in the international system and should be accorded due recognition as a full and equal member of the United Nations family. Solomon Islands enjoys productive and vibrant relations with the Republic of China. Solomon Islands calls on the United Nations to address the threats in the China

Straits. My delegation feels that preventive diplomacy must dictate the actions of the international community. Therefore, we must be proactive and responsible. Failure to act will undermine the credibility of the United Nations.

In closing, this is the moment for us to ensure that the Millennium Development Goals are fully implemented. As leaders, much is expected of us. We are duty-bound to create a world that is peaceful, prosperous and just — a world in which we can confidently guarantee a brighter future for our children. The draft outcome document (A/60/L.1) has something for everyone. The challenge is to translate our commitments into actions, lest history judge us harshly.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to convey the compliments of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz, and his best wishes for a successful meeting. I should also like to extend my thanks to the President of the General Assembly, to the Secretary-General, and to all those who contributed to the preparatory work for this international gathering.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, by virtue of its role in the international arena, and as the home of the Two Holy Mosques to which all Muslims turn, is determined to contribute to the success of this historic gathering.

This international summit is being held five years after the United Nations Millennium Summit, whose agreed-upon objectives still require more effort for them to be achieved. Today we are in dire need of an effective United Nations, one that is capable of fulfilling its responsibilities to maintain international peace and security, foster sustainable development and safeguard human rights, while respecting the specific characteristics of societies and cultures and their diversity.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia attaches great importance to sustainable development. We have allocated a significant portion of our expenditure to human development, which has enabled the Kingdom to achieve many of the Development Goals set out in the Millennium Summit. The Kingdom has also contributed to development efforts in developing countries throughout the world. Over the last three decades, Saudi Arabia has contributed an annual average of 4 per cent of its GDP to foreign aid. Eighty-three developing countries have benefited from this aid, making the Kingdom the foremost contributor in the world. The Kingdom is also one of the leading contributors to international development assistance. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia has taken the initiative of cancelling more than 6 billion US dollars of the debt owed it by some of the least developed countries, and also has provided debt relief to countries eligible under the international debt reduction initiative.

From this podium, we call upon all developed nations to honour their commitments to allocate 0.7 per cent of their GDP to development assistance. We therefore emphasize the importance of attaining international consensus on identifying new and innovative sources for development funding without straining the resources of other developing countries.

Terrorism threatens the entire world. It is imperative that we make a collective effort to combat it. In keeping with our Islamic faith, our heritage and our moral values, the Kingdom reaffirms its rejection and condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. In order to promote international cooperation in this area, last February Saudi Arabia organized an international counter-terrorism conference. The final communiqué issued at that conference, known as the Riyadh Declaration, reaffirmed the unified global will to combat terrorism and extremism and proposed practical measures to that end. The conference also adopted practical recommendations for drying up the sources of financing terrorism. In addition, it supported the proposal of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz, to establish an international counter-terrorism centre, a proposal that has received wide international support. Therefore, the Kingdom is pleased to present a draft resolution to the General Assembly calling for the establishment of a task force to review the recommendations of the Riyadh Declaration, including the creation of an international counter-terrorism centre. We greatly hope that the draft resolution will be endorsed so that we can take yet another step towards greater international cooperation in fighting terrorism, which is not specific to any nationality, ethnicity or religion.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia appreciates the vital role played by the United Nations agencies and hopes that efforts to reform our Organization will strengthen those agencies and enhance their capabilities to better meet the aspirations of our people. The Kingdom supports international consensus on expansion of Security Council membership and restricting veto power by prohibiting its use against the implementation of resolutions previously adopted by the Security Council.

Saudi Arabia calls for the General Assembly to regain its mandate as the principal body of the United Nations, as prescribed by its Charter.

The realization of peace and security requires adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, untainted by double standards in the implementation of its resolutions. The Kingdom renews its call to establish a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and the Gulf region. It also reiterates that respect for resolutions adopted by the international community is the means to resolve global conflicts. Therefore it is important to support the peace process in the Middle East.

The Arab countries have affirmed their commitment to a just peace by endorsing the initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz. We hope that concerted international efforts will lead to the realization of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people by ending the occupation and establishing an independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

With respect to the situation in Iraq, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reaffirms Iraq's territorial integrity and Arab identity, and hopes that the fraternal Iraqi people will overcome their differences in order to achieve the desired objectives.

Finally, I pray to God to grant us success in creating a world of harmony and peace.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan.

Mr. Koizumi (Japan): Before beginning my remarks, I would like to express my deepest condolences to those who have lost loved ones in Hurricane Katrina. We stand firm in our support of those who are struggling to recover from the horrifying devastation.

Today, I would like to share a vision of a new United Nations. We need a caring United Nations that reaches out to those who struggle with extreme poverty and that lends a hand to those who strive to help themselves. We need a strong United Nations that lays a path towards peacebuilding and that takes an active role in the fight against terrorism. We need an effective United Nations that reflects our aspirations and the standards of today's world, not those of 60 years ago.

The caring United Nations needs to enhance its efforts for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Achieving the Goals demands action, not just statements of good intentions. Implementation of the enhanced commitments made by developed countries, including Japan, will serve as a foundation for a better world. But efforts should not stop at financing. The new United Nations will need to encourage ownership by developing countries through partnership with the international community, focusing on a human-centred approach that we call human security.

Peace does not automatically prevail when a conflict ends. The new, strong United Nations, with the proposed Peacebuilding Commission in place, must show initiative in ensuring a smooth transition from ceasefire to nation-building and to reconciliation, justice and reconstruction. Japan is ready to play its part in that challenging but vital undertaking.

In the fight against terrorism, the new United Nations must play an active norm-setting role. In that spirit, I today signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. I also call for an early conclusion of negotiations on a draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

The world has changed dramatically over the past 60 years. Asia and Africa, once under the shackles of colonialism, are now significant players in our global community. For the past 60 years, Japan has determinedly pursued a course of development as a peace-loving nation, making a unique and significant contribution to the peace and prosperity of the world.

The composition of the Security Council must reflect those fundamental changes. Japan is convinced that Security Council reform is a just cause for the international community, as is the deletion of the long-obsolete "enemy State" clauses from the United Nations Charter. In a reformed Council, Japan is ready to play a larger role as a permanent member.

Last year, from this rostrum, I called upon my colleagues to rise to that fundamental challenge. Now, for the first time in United Nations history, there is a real prospect that action will be taken, with extensive support from Member States. Building upon that momentum, we must pursue an early decision for Security Council reform at this session of the General Assembly.

A renewed United Nations system, including a renewed Secretariat, must have the unwavering trust and support of all Member States and their citizens. The new, effective United Nations must therefore open itself to rigorous public scrutiny. Japan will work with like-minded countries to make that happen expeditiously.

Reform is always a challenge, as it requires us to confront the status quo. But that is no justification for inaction. Let us all unite in an endeavour to make this session of the General Assembly a session for action: action to achieve the comprehensive renewal of the United Nations.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Göran Persson, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden.

Mr. Persson (Sweden): For decades, solidarity with the poor and the oppressed has been a guiding principle for Sweden in international affairs. The United Nations has provided the structure needed to turn that solidarity into effective measures for peace and security.

Today, we need the United Nations not only for expressing solidarity; multilateral cooperation has become a necessity for all of us. To be sure, one can try to deal in isolation with climate change, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, famine and disease. But most likely, such efforts will fail.

Rarely has the need for joint action been so obvious as in the current Doha round. The benefits to development from trade can be realized only through greater market access and reduced subsidies.

Our times demand multilateral cooperation. That need increases over time and is as valid for large nations as for small ones. It requires a common agenda based on the recognition of shared responsibility. We all share the praise for progress. We all share the blame for problems. We all share the responsibility for ensuring change.

Tomorrow night, we will agree on a common agenda. It has many strengths. It demonstrates that peace and security, development and human rights form part of one single entity. It reminds us that we will not succeed in one area if we ignore the others. It affirms important principles, such as our collective responsibility to protect our populations from genocide and ethnic cleansing. It paves the way for important concrete measures such as the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, the creation of a Human Rights Council and the conclusion of a convention on terrorism.

But there are also areas in which we need to advance multilateral cooperation much further.

First, the recent lack of progress in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation constitutes a failure. The risks emanating from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction are far from fading. We need urgent measures for both disarmament and non-proliferation. Advancement in one area will bring pressure for progress in the other.

Secondly, tougher action must be taken to address climate change. A functioning Kyoto Protocol is a crucial start, but we must also look to the period after 2012. We must become better at combining economic growth with environmental sustainability.

Thirdly, we must agree on reforming the Security Council. The Charter includes all the provisions we need to address the threats of our times. It requires no revision when it comes to the use of force. What we do need is a Security Council that better lives up to its responsibility. We must improve the representation of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The Council's efficiency must be safeguarded. No extension of the veto power should take place.

Fourthly, developed nations must increase the level of their official development assistance. If we are to reach the Millennium Goals, more resources are needed for women's and children's rights, sexual and reproductive health, the fight against HIV/AIDS and for environmental protection. Also, measures must be taken to ensure good governance, freedom from corruption and strong political and economic institutions in all countries.

The founders of the United Nations knew that States working together would be able to achieve things that are beyond what even the most powerful State can accomplish by itself. Today, we need the vision, determination and political will of those men and women. As political leaders, we have an obligation to our citizens to abide by the common agenda agreed here. It is only through personal commitment by all of us that this will succeed.

The Co-Chairperson (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Guy Verhofstadt, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Mr. Verhofstadt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin my statement by congratulating and thanking Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has seized the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of our Organization to strengthen its effectiveness and legitimacy. In fact, the need for the United Nations is more palpable now than ever before. I must say that my country, Belgium, agrees with the Secretary-General's ambitious proposals, as set forth in his report "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005).

Unfortunately, the draft outcome document (A/60/L.1) arrived at on Tuesday is not as ambitious; nevertheless, it represents a fresh start and can, I believe, give the United Nations a strategic impetus. Our Organization will thus be better equipped to respond to the needs of the twenty-first century. I would like to thank, in particular, Mr. Jean Ping for his perseverance in providing the United Nations with a new mandate and new guidelines.

Belgium fully supports the basic idea that security, development and human rights are inseparable. This strategy can succeed only if we build upon powerful and representative institutions.

My country wishes to express its full support to the speedy establishment of the Human Rights Council. We are pleased that the concept of "responsibility to protect" has finally been recognized. Let us all hope that henceforth this should enable us to avoid tragedies like the one in Rwanda in 1994.

At the same time, we reaffirm our commitment to combat terrorism, to fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and against weapons that spread instability, poverty or misery.

Above all, let us not forget the need to invest in development. If we want to create a safe, free and democratic world, investment in development is an absolute necessity. This is why, five years ago, in this very Hall, we jointly proclaimed the Millennium Development Goals that we are reconfirming today.

It is true that some progress has been made, which is encouraging; but today we all must also realize that the results, unfortunately, have systematically fallen far short of the objectives, as shown by the limited progress in Africa. Let us, for example, consider Goal 1, reducing extreme poverty by half. If the current trend continues, Africa will achieve this Goal not in 2015 but instead in 2150 — that is, 135 years late.

Today, while the United Nations is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary, life expectancy in Africa does not exceed 46 years of age. Six out of 10 youngsters are carriers of HIV. Twenty-five million people have already died from HIV/AIDS, and just as many are living now with this dire perspective. Of the 35 poorest countries in the world, 31 are in Africa. Since 1998, more than four million people have died in armed conflicts in central Africa. This is the highest death toll since the Second World War. If this number of victims were to be found in another part of the world, for example in Europe, we would call it a World War. Nowadays, we only speak of regional conflict. One out of every five African children today succumbs to starvation, malnutrition or an easily curable disease.

This is unacceptable. This situation is morally unacceptable, politically dangerous and, economically speaking, a mistake that constitutes gross misconduct. We must help Africa out of this vicious circle, and we know how to do it. We know what Africa needs: political and economic stability in order to allow economic growth; investment in infrastructure, in health care, as well as equitable opportunities in the world marketplace and, of course, peace.

Peace is the first step, and it is time for us to put an end to arms trafficking. That is why Belgium has proposed starting, as soon as possible, negotiations on an international agreement on the arms trade.

Like peace, good governance is indispensable, governance that can achieve results. We can only realize this goal if we coordinate our aid and efforts worldwide. I am convinced that the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission will play a crucial role.

Belgium wants to contribute actively to this objective and is fully prepared to share her experience with transition in the Congo and Burundi.

Nonetheless, and this is very important, we do insist that agreements should be honoured and that promises should be kept. Too many promises have been broken: promises made by several African leaders, by several Western leaders and especially the promises of the entire international community. Currently, Belgium spends 0.45 per cent of its GDP for official development assistance, thus respecting its commitment, I am pleased to confirm, to reach the target of 0.7 per cent by 2010.

During this High-level Plenary Meeting, we must accomplish one thing: we must strengthen our commitment and, above all, carry out the promises we made five years ago to offer hundreds of millions of people more prosperity, more peace and more freedom. Those millions of people want to hear only one message: that we shall keep our word, that we shall keep our promise.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Said Wilbert Musa, Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, National Development and Public Service of Belize.

Mr. Musa (Belize): Five years ago, I stood at this very rostrum, committing my country and my Government to a global compact for development. As leaders, we agreed to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as the incidence of malaria and other major diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development.

In addition to meeting those targets, small countries like Belize have to find effective solutions to other grave concerns such as crime and violence in our societies and our vulnerability to natural disasters.

The terrible tragedy unleashed by Hurricane Katrina on a major city in the United States of America and the stunning paralysis and vulnerability it exposed should leave a very clear idea of the damage that is done to entire economies of small countries like Belize on an annual basis, away from the glare of international media attention. Our sister Caribbean country, Grenada, is but the latest example.

In the face of these economic, social and environmental challenges, some would say our goals are too ambitious, too idealistic, but idealism grounded in reality is what provides the passion for concerted action.

Like most other Member States, Belize's first Millennium Development Goals report shows mixed results in the progress towards the achievement of the targets. While there is a positive outlook for achieving universal primary education, eliminating gender disparity in education at all levels, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, there are considerable challenges to meeting the time-bound targets for poverty eradication and for halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

As a young, developing nation, we are faced with various demographic and economic challenges. For example, 52 per cent of our population is less than 19 years of age, 51 per cent of our people live in rural areas and the population density is 10.9 persons per square kilometre, which increases the cost of infrastructural development.

Growing inequality and income disparity, the rise in poverty hotspots especially within urban and indigenous communities, youth unemployment and malnutrition are critical MDG-related challenges that Belize is facing.

While we have made significant progress with respect to reversing the spread of malaria and tuberculosis, new emerging non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension, are on the rise.

In addition, our vulnerability to external shocks such as exploding oil prices, the dismantling of preferential access to industrial countries for agricultural commodities and vulnerability to destructive hurricanes make it difficult for countries like Belize to avoid high public debt, which in turn restricts our ability to invest in public and social services to reach all our people.

My Government has taken a head-on approach in meeting these challenges. We are very advanced in developing our five-year National Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan. This plan, which will be

completed by January 2006, is incorporating a results-oriented approach to poverty reduction using specific poverty-reduction targets based on the Millennium Development Goals.

An updated medium-term economic strategy is also under way that will incorporate debt management, fiscal policy, public-sector investment and growth with equity as integral components.

At the same time, we recognize that the eradication of poverty and the improvement of the quality of lives of Belizeans will only be sustainable if government is effective, transparent and accountable. Since 1998, my Government has been building a strong national integrity system, including an independent judiciary with security of tenure, a broad-based Governance Improvement Commission that is working to strengthen oversight institutions, like the Auditor-General, the Contractor-General and the Ombudsman, and modern legislation that safeguards accountability in the administration of public finances.

It is the position of my Government that the United Nations and its development system are indispensable to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. For millions of poor people around the world, a reformed United Nations with an agenda for international cooperation, promoting peace and security, and development and human rights can literally mean life over death, hope over despair.

Out of necessity, small countries like Belize tend to be more concerned with poverty and development, while the developed world tends to be more concerned with security issues. These differing perspectives might be the biggest obstacle to international cooperation in achieving the MDGs. The Secretary-General's report "In Larger Freedom" (A/59/2005) vividly and graphically demonstrates the links between security and development. They are two sides of the same coin. Collective security can never be built on a global minefield of poverty and injustice. What is needed is the global political will to make good on our respective pledges of five years ago.

Although the primary responsibility for development rests with national Governments, it is also essential that our developed partners follow through on the assistance to which they committed. International assistance is a key investment in human development. The Government of Belize, therefore, supports the call that, for aid to be effective, the volume of aid must be increased, aid must be more easily accessible and at lesser transaction costs, and aid must have country ownership.

We must commend the efforts of the Group of Eight to cancel the debt of those developing countries designated by the United Nations as heavily indebted poor countries. This is the type of partnership that we must develop if we are to accomplish the full implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in the decade to come.

The Government of Belize accepts that trade has the potential to advance the prosperity of the poorer countries of the world. Unfair trade practices not only limit that potential but also are inconsistent with the Goals.

Agricultural subsidies in rich countries continue to stifle the prosperity of efficient agriculture sectors in developing countries.

The Doha development round was launched in 2000 with the overarching objective of ensuring that the multilateral trade rules account for the needs of developing countries. There are high stakes for Belize in a successful conclusion of the round, that is, a conclusion that embodies the needs and concerns of developing countries, especially those with smaller economies.

The great achievements of the past century and the current wave of globalization have created more wealth and knowledge than ever before, making it possible for the first time in human history to eradicate poverty and improve the quality of life for men women and children.

Yet, there is persistent poverty and growing human insecurity. Our strategy of achieving sustainable economic growth together with social equity requires fundamental reform of social policies to reflect principles of universality, inclusion and solidarity. We must all recognize that we are our brothers' and our sisters' keepers. For Belize, the United Nations and its Charter epitomize these core and indispensable principles. The lives of millions around the world hang in the balance. Let us not lose this opportunity to change our world for the betterment of all.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency

Ms. Truong My Hoa, Vice-President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Ms. Truong My Hoa (Viet Nam) (*spoke in Vietnamese; interpretation provided by the delegation*): Five years ago leaders from 189 countries solemnly adopted the Millennium Declaration out of a deep desire for humanity to live in a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. Looking back over those years, we rejoice to note the progress achieved in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nevertheless, we cannot help but be concerned about the lack of progress or efficiency in the implementation of the MDGs in a large number of countries and regions. While we recognize shortcomings in national development policies and institutional capacity, we can all clearly see that those difficulties also arise from the international political and economic environment, which has become more complex, especially with the rise of terrorism and the growing tendency to use force in international relations and to resort to protectionism in trade.

For a long time the Vietnamese people have been highly esteemed by the international community for their resolve and courage in the struggle to protect people's human rights to live in freedom and independence and to determine their own destiny. Nowadays Viet Nam is commended for its important socio-economic achievements and its implementation of the MDGs. I take this opportunity to draw members' attention to the fact that, as of 2004, Viet Nam had reduced poverty rates by three fifths as compared with 1993, thus attaining the MDG of halving poverty 10 years ahead of schedule. Regarding universal primary education, Viet Nam eliminated illiteracy and achieved universal primary education back in 2000 and at present — universal junior secondary education exists in nearly half of the provinces in Viet Nam. Significant progress in promoting gender equality is clearly reflected in the constant rise of Viet Nam's gender development index, from 0.668 in 1998 to 0.689 in 2004. More than 27 per cent of parliamentarians in the Vietnamese National Assembly are women, ranking Viet Nam among the leading countries for this indicator in the Asia-Pacific region. Women are today fully recognized for their significant role in the family and in society. As for the other MDGs, the under-five mortality rate has been halved and the maternal mortality rate has been reduced by one third as compared with 1990.

The Vietnamese Government has submitted a national report on the implementation of the MDGs in Viet Nam, to contribute to discussions during this summit. The root cause of the encouraging results in Viet Nam just mentioned is the determination to promote the cause of socio-economic development evinced by the State and the people of our country. Other positive factors contributing to implementation of the MDGs in Viet Nam include perseverance in reform, integration of the MDGs into national socio-economic development and international cooperation programmes, mobilization of domestic resources, active integration into the global economy, expansion of external economic relations, a combination of economic growth and promotion of social welfare, administrative reforms and enhancement of the capacity and wide participation of the people.

Let me, on behalf of the Vietnamese Government and State, take this opportunity to express our high appreciation to United Nations organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, international non-governmental organizations and foreign friends for the valuable assistance extended to Viet Nam for our development.

Although the implementation of the MDGs is the primary responsibility of each country, the assistance of the international community is very important. To better assist developing countries in successfully achieving the MDGs by 2015, we wish to make the following recommendations: first, honour the commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of gross national product to development assistance, reduce and write off debt for developing nations and facilitate the accession of the developing countries to the World Trade Organization; secondly, implement the MDGs and other commitments made at global conferences over the previous decade; thirdly, assist developing countries in framing strategies and building capacity to achieve the MDGs and increase coordination of donor assistance; fourthly, strengthen support for South-South cooperation, including the two plus one cooperation programmes between Viet Nam and a number of African countries.

For a long time we have agreed on the need to reform the United Nations to make the Organization more efficient in fulfilling the mandates enshrined in the United Nations Charter and to reflect the enormous changes in the world over the past 60 years. On this issue, Viet Nam shares the views of a large number of

nations that the reform of the United Nations must be based on the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and must be conducted in a balanced and comprehensive way, with a view to ensuring democracy, transparency and representativeness of the Organization, as well as to increasing its efficiency in the interest of all Member States.

Recent complex developments in the world give added urgency to the task of bridging the development gap and promoting equitable and sustainable development within and between countries with a view to rooting out the causes of instability in the world today. The MDGs are a crucial means to that end.

For its part, Viet Nam reiterates its commitment to the implementation of the MDGs. In fulfilling and surpassing those Goals, we will also help to achieve the common goal of our people, namely, to build a strong Viet Nam with prosperous citizens, and a just, democratic and civilized society.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Zia Massoud, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Mr. Massoud (Afghanistan) (*spoke in Farsi; English text provided by the delegation*): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the Government and the people of Afghanistan, to express my heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the United States of America in connection with the tragic loss of life and the widespread destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.

It is a great and distinct privilege for me to address the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. This occasion provides a unique opportunity for all Member States to review lessons learned and assess the present situation and future prospects.

For the past 60 years, the United Nations has been engaged in the maintenance of international peace and security, development and the protection and promotion of human rights. The values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations are still valid. However, the end of the cold war, the new geopolitical realities of today's world and the emergence of new threats and challenges require a rethinking of the Organization's role.

We welcome the presentation of the three comprehensive reports: the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, entitled "A more secure world: our shared responsibility" (A/59/565); the report of the Millennium Project, entitled "Investing in Development" (A/59/727); and the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005).

At the time of the Millennium Summit in September 2000, Afghanistan, owing to the situation prevailing in the country, was unable to adopt a national strategy for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, since the Bonn process began, Afghanistan, with the assistance of the international community, has made impressive gains in the social, political and economic fields.

We have convened two loya jirgas. The first led to the formation of a Transitional Government. The second adopted a new constitution establishing a democratic Islamic State. Furthermore, we successfully held presidential elections, and, in less than three days, we will hold parliamentary and provincial elections.

More than 5 million children, including girls, have returned to school throughout Afghanistan, and approximately 4 million refugees have returned to their place of origin from neighbouring countries. However, the effects of the armed conflicts imposed on my country persist. Poverty, the high rates of infant and maternal mortality and the lack of resources for basic social services make the international community's continued assistance indispensable.

The successful holding of the parliamentary elections will mark the last step towards implementation of the historic Bonn Agreement of December 2001. The international community's sustained support and engagement are required over the coming years for the rehabilitation and the reconstruction of the country, as well as for the consolidation of peace and security.

In that regard, we emphasize the following key principles for the further enhancement of cooperation between the Afghan Government and the international community: the Afghan Government's leadership role in all aspects of the reconstruction process; the need for a just allocation of resources throughout the country; the need to ensure that international efforts

serve to build lasting capacity and sustainable institutions; and, finally, the need to ensure public transparency and accountability at all levels.

Afghanistan is in the process of preparing its national development strategy, which includes a programme of action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Owing to the circumstances Afghanistan faced at the time of the 2000 Summit, we have fixed 2020, rather than 2015, as our target date for achieving the Goals.

Afghanistan is one of the least developed countries of the world. We firmly stress the importance of implementing the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in Brussels in May 2001.

We also underline the need for continued, coordinated and effective international support for achieving the development goals in countries emerging from conflict. In that context, my Government welcomes, and expresses its full support for, the proposal of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to establish a Peacebuilding Commission and a Peacebuilding Support Office within the framework of the United Nations.

While recognizing the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan would like to stress the importance of the long needed reform of the Council in terms of both its composition and its working methods.

Terrorism continues to be one of the main threats to international peace and security. More than any other country, Afghanistan continues to suffer that global menace. The Government of Afghanistan strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reaffirms its commitment to cooperate with the international community to eliminate that scourge. In that context, Afghanistan welcomes and supports the ongoing efforts carried out within the framework of the United Nations to finalize the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Let me conclude by expressing Afghanistan's full support for the outcome document before us. We are confident that this historic gathering of world leaders will result in a more efficient and more effective Organization, better able to address the challenges of the twenty-first century and ensure the prosperity, security and dignity of the peoples of the world.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by Mr. Roberto de Almeida, President of the National Assembly of Angola.

Mr. Almeida (Angola) (*spoke in Portuguese; text provided by the delegation*): It is for me a great honour to address the Assembly on behalf of His Excellency Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola.

Allow me, at the outset, to congratulate the Co-Chairpersons and to reiterate how pleased we are to see them presiding over the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

Also, we wish to express our sincere sympathy and solidarity with the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The reports on implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), prepared as input for this summit's debates, highlight the complexity of the challenges faced by the international community. Indeed, the international community is no longer in a phase of reaffirming commitments; rather, the time has come for it to muster the political will to mobilize the resources required to fulfil the obligations it has committed to in all major United Nations conferences, among which I would highlight the World Summit for Social Development, the Millennium Summit, the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, and the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

In this context, there is an imperative need to correct the anomalies currently affecting international trade so that it can become a true driver of development, to broaden South-South cooperation, to forgive the debt of poor countries, and to promote science and technology as critical factors influencing the progress of developing countries.

Other essential questions are those relating to the role of education and its adaptation to the realities and needs of emerging countries, gender, and the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is today one of the main threats to the peoples of Africa and other regions of the world.

We are in absolute agreement with the analysis and conclusions contained in the Secretary-General's

reports. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General for his personal commitment, dedication and leadership, as well as for his outstanding contribution to the reaffirmation of the objectives and principles set out in the United Nations Charter, the sixtieth anniversary of which we very proudly commemorate.

We welcome the draft political Declaration before the Assembly at this summit. The Angolan delegation is very pleased with the agreements achieved on the four main topics of the development cluster, namely, the Millennium Goals, foreign debt, trade and development aid. Furthermore, we would like to stress that in the final document references have been included to the special needs of Africa.

On the subject of terrorism, the recent adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism demonstrates that it is also possible to reach an agreement when the subject is the fight against terrorism, including arriving at a definition. The Angolan delegation shares the view that the fight against terrorism requires a worldwide strategy, and for that reason we commend current efforts to conclude an international convention against terrorism.

We support the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, the objective of which, as set out in the final document, is to assist countries emerging from conflict in the process of their economic recovery, preservation and peacebuilding. However, based on our own experience, we believe the mandate of the Peacebuilding Commission would not be complete if it did not include a conflict prevention component.

The Angolan delegation supports the idea that we must pay attention to the specificities of post-conflict countries that are facing problems of an economic and social nature, the resolution of which has a direct bearing on the preservation and consolidation of peace. Regrettably, those aspects are not always given due attention and, since the funds required for reconstruction are not mobilized in sufficient measure, such countries are unduly penalized. Such is the current situation in Angola — a situation that we consider to be extremely unfair.

The Angolan delegation is pleased to note that there is a broadening and — hopefully — continuing debate on such sensitive issues as the use of force in international relations, the responsibility to protect and the Human Rights Council.

In proposing a series of measures designed to strengthen the United Nations, the Secretary-General provided an opportunity for institutional reform. That effort will be able to succeed only if United Nations agencies are able to fully perform their functions as set out in the Charter. We therefore reaffirm the central role of the General Assembly as the main deliberative body of the United Nations.

With regard to the Security Council, we agree that it should be more representative, efficient and transparent. The international community, on behalf of which the Security Council makes its decisions based on the Charter, must feel that it is integral to the decision-making mechanism.

Another problem which must be of concern to the international community is the illicit exploitation of natural resources. This constitutes a threat to both peace and security, prevents the development of affected countries and contributes to massive human rights violations.

In this regard, the Angolan delegation underlines the importance of ensuring respect for international humanitarian law, particularly as it relates to the protection of civilians in conflict situations. In my delegation's view, the prevailing lack of respect for humanitarian law deserves particular and urgent attention from the United Nations.

In Angola, we have been trying to implement the Millennium Development Goals, and we are continuing to make every effort to consolidate peace and promote national reconciliation so as to ensure both economic and social stability for our country. At the same time, we are committed to bringing political activity back to normal, and to ensuring that democratic institutions are fully operational. Preparations for general elections in 2006 are at an advanced stage.

Let me conclude by underscoring our belief that never before has humankind's destiny has been so interconnected as in our time. We must respond in a collective manner with unity of action that safeguards the interests of not just a few, but all of us. Thus the preservation of the central role of the United Nations in international relations is of the utmost importance.

Given its mandate, its universal character and the number of its organizations and programmes, the

United Nations is well positioned to consider the issues the world faces in the twenty-first century. The nature and complexity of those issues will evolve over time, but their overarching characteristic is that their effects do not respect borders. Thus only farsighted and wide-ranging actions on the part of the international community can provide the positive answers that humankind expects and deserves.

In conclusion, I hope that the final document to be adopted at this summit will represent a major contribution to the Millennium Goals and targets: peace, collective security, sustainable development and the promotion of human rights.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Joschka Fischer, Deputy Federal Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Fischer (Germany) (*spoke in German. English text provided by the delegation*): In the world of the twenty-first century, we are confronted almost daily with new risks and dangers. How can we avert conflicts about limited resources? How can we preserve the global ecosystem? How can we overcome the growing gap between rich and poor? How should we shape globalization? How do we ensure development opportunities for everyone? How do we prevent global conflicts?

Above all, security in the twenty-first century means investment in development, in democracy and in human rights. All of those challenges are inseparably linked. They are our core tasks.

Five years after the Millennium Summit, we, the members of the United Nations, must assess together the extent to which we have achieved the Goals laid down in 2000. We must discuss how we want to proceed in order to implement the Millennium Declaration further and in full. And we must make the United Nations, as the mainstay of multilateralism, stronger and more efficient. We therefore welcome the fact that the international community has succeeded, after all, in agreeing on a summit document (A/60/L.1). That paper provides a point of departure for further negotiations, even if it falls short of our expectations in many areas.

The Millennium Development Goals are the social Magna Carta of our time. Our actions must be guided by them. Now we must continue to work to make them binding. For we cannot accept that well over 1 billion people are living on less than one dollar a day. We cannot allow a situation to exist in which 11 million children die each year before their fifth birthday.

We must greatly strengthen the rights of women, and we must do everything we can to ensure that women finally have equal opportunities in education, in vocational training and at work. We must ensure that environmental protection and the principles of sustainable development become key components of international policy. Only in that way can hunger, poverty and disease be overcome on a lasting basis. Only in that way can we stop the ever-greater destruction of the sources of life on our planet.

Germany is aware of its responsibility in that respect. We want to increase our development aid, and we have agreed with our European partners on a step-by-step plan until 2015 to that end. We are also considering new instruments to finance development. We are working with other States on the Action Against Hunger and Poverty alliance initiated by President da Silva. Fairer trade conditions — especially free access to markets — are vital for lasting development. However, it must also be said that lasting successes will be achieved only through developing countries' own efforts — in particular, good governance and the implementation of rule-of-law principles.

Development is also inextricably linked to climate protection. We therefore must do everything in our power to implement the Framework Convention on Climate Change and to further develop the Kyoto Protocol. The steady rise in the number of natural disasters means that vigorous action must be agreed upon at the international level.

Discussing those issues today as representatives of our States, we must not forget that people in our countries are not interested in debates about agendas or procedure. They want our discussion to be decision- and result-oriented. Therefore, Germany would have preferred a document with a clearer mandate for action in many areas. It is regrettable that no agreement could be reached on the key issue of disarmament and non-proliferation or on the definition of terrorism. Our task must now be to discuss how we can nonetheless make progress in those spheres of key importance to international security.

Although I welcome the proposal contained in the summit document to establish a human rights council, it raises serious questions. Without universal protection of human rights and without the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, we will neither achieve sustainable development nor be able to guarantee lasting peace and stability. Therefore, we must do everything we can to make the new body a powerful instrument. The negotiating body set up for that purpose should present its proposals as quickly as possible, preferably by the end of the year.

The proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission is also of great significance, because preserving world peace and international security remains the most important undertaking for the United Nations. The Commission will fill a gap in the Organization's institutional structure.

If we want to make the United Nations equal to the task of securing peace, stability and development comprehensively and globally, then we must equip it to cope with the challenges of the twenty-first century. The pressure of globalization and international crises and conflicts have made radical reform essential in all spheres.

I am firmly convinced that the ultimate success of such reforms will largely depend on reform of the Security Council. Excuses and half-hearted or bad compromises will not advance our cause. The group-of-four countries have submitted a proposal that meets the needs of the United Nations, its Member States and its regions. Those reforms must stay on the agenda. I call upon all Members to resume consultations on reforms at this sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

In the twenty-first century, the world will need a strong United Nations that has been renewed in every sphere. Either we act now and shape globalization through cooperation and partnership, or the crises and conflicts of the globalized world will force us to respond. We will therefore join forces with our partners and friends and will work with determination and the necessary patience to strengthen the United Nations by renewing it.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jean Asselborn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Luxembourg.

Mr. Asselborn (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Sixty years ago, on 26 June 1945, the Charter of the United Nations, which created the Organization and whose humanist and generous spirit continues to inspire our action to the present day, was signed in San Francisco. That fundamental and innovative act — the lesson drawn by the international community from the failure of the League of Nations and from the tribulations of war — still arouses our admiration today. My country, Luxembourg, is very proud to have been among the founding members that carried the United Nations to the baptismal font.

Today, 60 years later, we are meeting on the banks of the East River to show the same courage and the same vision for the benefit of our common endeavour, the United Nations. It is up to us to be worthy of the heritage we have received and to take up with firm and confident hands the torch handed to us by our predecessors.

As so well stated by our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose action at the head of the Organization we commend, the United Nations is indeed at a crossroads. We must adopt the policies and decisions that will lead to a genuine renewal of multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core. That is the challenge we face; that is what is at stake at this summit.

A great debate began in January this year under the enlightened guidance of the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, Mr. Jean Ping. Here, I should like to pay public tribute to his many presidential qualities. During much of that time, my country had the honour to serve in the presidency of the European Union and thus was able not only to lead our internal work with a view to developing the European Union's positions on the various subjects under discussion, but also to present and defend European points of view during the debates conducted under the aegis of the Assembly presidency. In parallel, a broad consultation process was initiated by the European Union in New York, in capitals and at many ministerial meetings with groups of third countries or individual countries to launch the political momentum that must form the very basis for United Nations reform.

Throughout that work, now continued energetically under the British presidency, the European Union has shown itself to be a determined

and committed partner motivated by a strong will to achieve ambitious and balanced results, in keeping with the objective set during the European Council of March 2005. That ambition obviously continues to guide us. The search for innovative solutions is inevitable, given that we see a growing interdependence of challenges and threats. Increasingly, peace and security, development, human rights, democracy and the rule of law are all linked through close interactions.

Faced with this situation, the answer is clear: we need an effective and overhauled multilateralism that is adapted to the special circumstances of the beginning of the twenty-first century and provided with sufficient instruments and resources to carry out its mission fully.

Development is and must remain the focus of international attention. Whereas many studies, the latest of which is the 2005 Human Development Report, confirm that progress towards the Millennium Development Goals is still uneven and that delays and even setbacks are regrettably occurring in certain regions, particularly in Africa.

Given the scourge of underdevelopment, we must act and act quickly. In May of this year, under our presidency, the European Union took a major decision to mobilize substantial additional official development assistance and to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income between now and 2015.

My country is proud to be part of the group of countries, still too small, that will achieve the 0.7 per cent of gross national income rate in a few years. Substantial efforts must be made by donor and recipient countries to improve the quality of assistance, good practices, good governance and to combat corruption.

Trade questions will be at the top of the world agenda as the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong approaches. Humanitarian disasters, the tsunami, recent famines in Africa and Hurricane Katrina have reminded us, if there ever was a need, of the fact that we need to have instruments with sufficient financial resources that can be mobilized more quickly and on a more predictable basis.

With this in mind, my country strongly supports a review of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) and has already announced its determination to contribute substantially to a strengthened CERF. Today, our Minister for Cooperation announced that Luxembourg will give four million dollars to this fund. Improved continuity and consistency must mark the action of the international community in post-conflict situations. This idea is central to the new Peacebuilding Commission, which we opportunely decided to create and which should be set up quickly. This Commission will allow us to improve our management of crises and humanitarian activities and will re-launch the development process.

International intervention must be based on the fundamental axiom that there is no peace without development and no development without peace.

In the spring of 2005 in this very same Hall during a very dignified and moving ceremony, we commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. May that reminder of the horrors of the Holocaust be a constant reminder for the international community that we should no longer remain powerless and passive when faced with genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

That is why what we call "the responsibility to protect" must become a concrete reality when the situation calls for it.

In the same light, we should strengthen our machinery for protecting human rights, given that human rights are the third pillar of United Nations activities, along with development and security, which are in constant interaction.

The early establishment of a Human Rights Council, which we are preparing to create, should strengthen United Nations activities in this sphere and allow for closer follow-up and more effective monitoring of the status of human rights throughout the world.

These topics, to which we should add other important topics such as, obviously, combating terrorism, the environment, sustainable development, and disarmament and non-proliferation, should be debated and dealt with within a multilateral framework of legitimate and effective institutions supported by services whose quality, objectiveness and probity are above any suspicion.

The reforms, already begun or planned, will, I am quite sure, help to achieve fully the goals that we all share.

Given the ambitious goals that I have just stated, have we really managed to move forward? Are we worthy of the heritage left by the founding fathers of the United Nations? Of course, I would have preferred that we were more capable of advancing agreement and of taking bolder decisions that would make us more immediately operational, but that has proved impossible.

Nonetheless, this High-level Plenary Meeting has agreed on certain orientations and taken decisions in principle that lay the groundwork for future progress. Concerning certain questions, precise mandates and detailed schedules outline the steps to follow and to implement those decisions quickly and with determination. The bases have been established. Now, we must build so that the structure does not remain without a roof. Let us all make a firm and irreversible commitment motivated by a true sense of urgency in order to finish this important task as of this General Assembly.

An American intellectual recently stated, "Like fairies and paper money, the United Nations ceases to exist if people stop believing in it".

Through our vigorous activities sixty years after the founding of the United Nations, we must show that we continue to believe firmly in this Organization that we share.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I now give the floor to His Excellency Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bhutan.

Mr. Wangchuk (Bhutan): I bring the greetings and good wishes of our King, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuk, to this meeting and to the United Nations at its sixtieth anniversary year.

At the outset, I would like to convey Bhutan's sympathy and solidarity with the United States in its efforts to recover from the ravages of Hurricane Katrina.

We would like to thank all those who worked meticulously to prepare for this meeting. The people of the world have high expectations from this gathering. The outcome document that we will approve, while not meeting all expectations, does contain important agreements that have to be implemented. This is crucial if we are to deliver on our promises to our people.

In the words of the Secretary-General, "the human family will not enjoy security without development, will not enjoy development without security, and will enjoy neither without respect for human rights" (*A/60/341, annex II*). Today, more than ever before, we live in an interconnected and interdependent world and face challenges and threats that no nation can tackle alone. Therefore, global action to address the issues facing humanity is the need of our time. Collective action calls for an effective multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core, to maintain international peace and security and promote international cooperation. Towards this end, we must reform and strengthen the Organization and its institutions.

Global action can sustain and become credible only if we seriously follow up on our commitments and implement the goals and objectives agreed upon at the Millennium Summit and other major United Nations conferences. Our community of 191 Member States is not a homogenous one and, although the challenges are the same, perceptions vary and the nature and scale of challenges faced differ from country to country and region to region. It is therefore important to ensure that we approach all issues in a holistic and balanced manner and that the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter are respected and upheld at all times.

As noted by the Secretary-General in his report (A/60/81), the progress made by the least developed countries (LDCs) is insufficient to achieve the goals of the Brussels Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As the primary responsibility for development rests on individual countries, we must increase our own efforts to tackle problems that impede development. At the same time, our development partners must scale up their assistance, provide full debt relief, assist and enhance trade and facilitate technology transfer. We urge the developed countries to fulfil their aid commitment of 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product and allocate 30 per cent of that assistance to the LDCs. We commend those countries that have already reached or exceeded the 0.7 per cent target. Accelerated global partnership between the LDCs and the international community is urgent as the General Assembly prepares

to undertake the mid-term review of the Brussels Programme of Action next year.

A recent United Nations report states that the relatively poor performance of the Asia-Pacific LDCs is overshadowed by the fast growth of other countries in that region. It also reports that those LDCs receive less than half the average per capita aid given to LDCs in other regions. That is a matter of serious concern and we urge the international community to address the situation faced by the 14 LDCs of the Asia-Pacific region where 260 million people live.

The Royal Government of Bhutan is deeply committed to the Millennium Development Goals and has assumed national ownership of our effort to achieve them. We are hopeful that, with the continued support of our development partners and the international community, we will be able to achieve most of the Goals by 2015. Achievement of the Goals will go a long way towards realizing our national development goal of increasing gross national happiness.

Permit me to briefly touch upon this development paradigm. For over two decades, Bhutan's development process has been guided by the concept of gross national happiness — a concept enunciated by His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuk. It stems from the belief that the ultimate goal of every human being is happiness and its attainment should be the purpose of development. We believe that the State should pursue policies and strategies to address the holistic needs of the human individual — both physical and spiritual — and thus create the conditions for achieving happiness. Increasing gross domestic product enhances physical comfort but on its own cannot promote overall well-being. There are other elements that must be addressed, which we have determined to be the following: conservation of the natural environment, preservation of culture and good governance. In our view, that is a more holistic and sustainable approach to development, which could perhaps provide some answers to the many ills that afflict our societies. I call upon the international community to reflect on this.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I call next on His Excellency Mr. Kassymzhomart Kemelevich Tokaev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Tokaev (Kazakhstan): This anniversary summit is a milestone event in the history of the United Nations. We are duty bound here to adopt decisions designed to radically improve the functioning of the United Nations.

In our view, United Nations reform should be geared, first and foremost, towards the consolidation of the international community in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. Kazakhstan believes that it is crucial to create the political and economic conditions needed to ensure the inseparability and complementarity of the three main pillars of the modern world: development, freedom and peace. The United Nations should not tolerate such phenomena as misery and poverty, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the spread of dangerous diseases, discrimination and terrorism. Regrettably, none of those human vices have been eradicated yet. To make things even worse, threats to peace, security and human health have grown manifoldly.

That is why we should focus our efforts on enhancing the effectiveness of our Organization, a task that is all the more important in view of serious lapses that have occurred in the work of the United Nations. As members of the community of nations, we should work to improve the image of the United Nations as the bastion of peoples' hopes and aspirations. The quality of decisions taken by the United Nations should be improved, their implementation should be monitored more closely and human resources management should be enhanced. In that context, it is very important to strengthen the functions of the United Nations Secretariat.

Kazakhstan believes that a greater role and a higher status for the United Nations General Assembly as the main deliberative, decision-making and representative body of our Organization would promote genuine democracy in international relations.

As for the enlargement of the Security Council, we believe that the issue should ultimately be resolved on the basis of broad international agreement in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical representation and taking into account the contribution of States concerned towards the development of the world economy and regional and global security.

Peacekeeping functions of the United Nations should be enhanced. Moreover, our Organization should not simply observe efforts to save victims of major natural and man-made disasters from the sidelines.

The destiny of the United Nations is in our hands and that is why we should strive to promote mutual understanding, constructive approaches, responsibility and competence. Those are the principles that have always guided Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

As the first State in the world to voluntarily close down its nuclear testing ground and give up its nuclear arsenal, Kazakhstan is a committed and consistent champion of an enhanced non-proliferation regime. We are deeply disturbed by the fact that, essentially, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is not working, as demonstrated by the outcome of the recent NPT Review Conference in New York. There should be no room for double standards in our approach to the issue of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, since any ambiguity in this matter may result in the spread of those deadly weapons, new conflicts and stand-offs, with the potential use of weapons of mass destruction.

The efforts being undertaken at the global level to combat international terrorism are not sufficiently effective. The potential of the United Nations and relevant regional organizations in addressing that most dangerous threat to humanity should be tapped to a fuller extent. It is our principled position that without joint efforts and effective practical action we will not be able to win the war against international terrorism.

Kazakhstan has already come up with a proposal to set up a special body on regional organizations and welcomes the establishment of a committee on the subject.

Speaking about the reform of the United Nations, we have to bear in mind that the world is becoming increasingly more diverse. The problems that exist in Central Asia are specific to that region and yet they are also typical of the other parts of the world. Along with the other countries in Central Asia, Kazakhstan is making every effort to address such pressing challenges as international terrorism and religious extremism, illegal migration and the drug trade, trafficking in human beings and shortages of water resources.

Despite all the difficulties and challenges, over the 60 years of its history, the United Nations has established itself in the international community as a universal organization for which there is no alternative. In the final analysis, we are the United Nations, and we alone determine the future of this Organization.

Having firmly embarked on the path of social and economic reform, Kazakhstan has emerged as one of the most dynamically developing and successful States in the world. The Government of Kazakhstan has been implementing a social programme, unprecedented in scope, to raise the standards of living in the country. And yet our efforts in this area have not been duly recognized by the United Nations. We disagree with how the United Nations experts calculate the human development index in our country. Such assessments, based on uncorroborated sources and data, only serve to undermine the credibility of the United Nations in the eyes of the international community and breed mistrust towards our Organization.

My country is a universally recognized leader in Central Asia. The President of Kazakhstan is confidently leading the country along the path of economic progress and genuine democracy. Kazakhstan cannot imagine a prosperous future for itself without close and active cooperation with the United Nations.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I call next on His Excellency Mr. Youssouf Ouedraogo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): First, allow me to express to the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. George W. Bush, and to the Government and the people of America, the compassion and solidarity which Burkina Faso feels following the natural disaster in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi caused by Hurricane Katrina.

This session of the General Assembly is being held at a time when we face two issues, the mid-term review of the Millennium Development Goals and United Nations reform.

I wish to congratulate the Secretary-General for his vision, admirably laid out in the report "In Larger Freedom" (A/59/2005), which he has submitted to us. I would like as well to pay well-deserved tribute to our outgoing president, Mr. Jean Ping, and through him, to his country, Gabon, and to that country's president, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, for the honour they have brought to Africa.

By adopting in 2000 the Millennium Declaration, the leaders of the world pointed the way towards the creation of a new world order that would be more just

and less stricken by poverty. Five years have now passed; it is time for a stocktaking. What sober conclusions can we draw? Despite a particularly difficult international environment and subregional context, Burkina Faso has forced open the doors to progress to achieve average economic growth of 6 per cent per year and has improved a considerable number of social indicators.

The stability of public institutions and good economic governance have contributed in particular to these results. While the impact of macroeconomic progress has remained limited in terms of the general level of poverty, the implementation of the Strategic Framework to Combat Poverty drafted by our Government offers better prospects.

In the area of education, a strategic sector for sustainable development, the school population grew by 6.7 per cent on average between 1990 and 2004, while the gross school rate went from 30 per cent to 57.6 per cent. But despite this positive trend, achieving universal schooling by 2015 will call for greater efforts and stronger initiatives, in particular in the area of infrastructure and human resource development. In addition, considerable headway has been achieved in the area of gender equality. By 2004, the ratio of girls to boys attained 0.77 in primary education and 0.67 in secondary education.

The health situation has improved on the whole. The overall rate of infant and child mortality dropped 35 points between 1998 and 2003, and the maternal mortality rate dropped 82 points between 1993 and 1998.

In the fight against HIV/AIDS, which is being personally overseen by the head of State, considerable progress has been achieved. According to UNAIDS data from sentinel sites and the results of a population and health survey, the HIV/AIDS rate went from 7.17 per cent in 1997 to 6.5 per cent in 2001, to 4.2 per cent in 2002 and finally to 1.9 per cent in 2003.

On the other hand, malaria is still an endemic illness. It is the main cause of death among children under the age of five. The Government is working to initiate programmes to combat this scourge, but, to be honest, effectively combating malaria requires increased mobilization on the part of the international community, as is the case for AIDS.

The need for sustainable environmental management has led us to elaborate and implement specific programmes by subsector to speed up protection of and rational use of natural resources. As for access to better water sources, a priority objective, the needs of the people are now 80 per cent taken care of. Continued efforts by the Government and its partners should eventually ensure drinking water for all.

Burkina Faso has been selected as a candidate for fast-track implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We see this not only as an acknowledgement of our results, but especially of the need to redouble efforts to meet this major challenge.

We firmly believe that there is room for hope. Therefore the joint and coordinated action of the nations of the world must be pursued resolutely and be strengthened to create everywhere an environment which will promote peacebuilding, security and progress for all. Burkina Faso welcomes the decisions taken to reduce the poor countries' debt burden. We also welcome the recent initiatives to combat hunger and poverty, to find new funding to finance development and to open industrialized countries' markets to products from countries of the South. We have a duty to respect fully the commitments we have undertaken together to the benefit of our respective peoples. We have the means to do so. Globalization has irrevocably linked our respective destinies and we have no choice but to succeed together.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I call next on His Excellency Mr. Ghirmai Ghebremariam, Chairman of the delegation of Eritrea.

Mr. Ghebremariam (Eritrea): I deliver this statement on behalf of the late Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea, His Excellency Mr. Ali Said Abdella, who passed away on 28 August 2005. Mr. Abdella had been designated to head the Eritrean delegation to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, and would have loved to personally address the Assembly. I would like to take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the people and the Government of Eritrea, all the countries that sent kind condolences.

The Millennium Declaration of 2000 embodied the noble development goals that humanity aspired to collectively achieve by 2015. However, five years after the Declaration, it is becoming increasingly clear that,

in spite of significant progress made in many regions and countries, most low-income countries will not be able to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The case of sub-Saharan Africa is of particular and immediate concern. Almost all the countries of that region are off track, and the prospects of achieving most — let alone all — of the Goals by 2015 are remote.

If the commitments to the Millennium Development Goals are to be taken seriously and countries are to have a realistic prospect of meeting the targets, there are two crucial factors that have to be met. First, while pro-poor policy reforms by the recipient countries are necessary conditions for meeting the Millennium Goals, developed countries should turn pledges and promises into concrete action by providing the financing needed for achieving them. Secondly, development assistance is more effective when recipients "own" the development process. National policies and programmes to promote poverty reduction and achieve development goals should be formulated by a broad group of stakeholders within a country.

At independence, the new Eritrean Government inherited a devastated economy and infrastructure, ineffective institutions, a large exiled population and an empty treasury. Yet by mid-1991, the de facto independence year, the Government was able to take effective steps to reconstruct the economy by, inter alia, establishing the regulatory and institutional framework and investing in infrastructure, including school and health systems, water and sanitation facilities and roads. The private sector responded to the favourable investment climate by investing in services, construction and other resource-based industries. As a result, Eritrea embarked on a promising journey of economic progress and, during the period 1992-1997, the Eritrean economy registered an impressive growth rate of 7.4 per cent.

Unfortunately, Eritrea's promising start was to be disrupted by the outbreak of a border conflict with Ethiopia in May 1998, which quickly escalated into war. During the period 1998-2000, Eritrea also suffered its worst drought in many years. Following the signing of the Algiers Peace Agreement in 2000, the Government of Eritrea embarked on an economic recovery and reintegration programme. Eritreans had hoped for a speedy border demarcation based on the ruling of the Boundary Commission. Unfortunately, we have not been able to fully turn our attention and resources to tackling the most pressing development challenges because of Ethiopia's refusal to abide by the final and binding decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, which was sanctioned and guaranteed by the United Nations, and because of the refusal of the Security Council to fulfil the legal obligations of the United Nations.

Let me turn now to the Millennium targets. Notwithstanding the obstacles to which I have referred, I am happy to report that Eritrea is projected to achieve eight of the 10 targets by 2015. We realize, however, that that is no cause for celebration, for three reasons. First, Eritrea is off track in two crucial areas, namely the eradication of extreme poverty and the achievement of universal primary education. Secondly, the Millennium Goals, even if they were to be fully achieved, represent only the minimum benchmarks for development. Thirdly, Eritrea's road map to 2015 was prepared on the basis of some crucial assumptions including the resolution of the "no-war no-peace" situation and the return to normal rainfall.

We believe that Eritrea's MDG status shows that, even with modest resources, countries can go a long way in achieving the Goals if they have the right policies and strong Government commitment.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Assembly that Eritrea will, as in the past, continue to take the necessary steps and make sacrifices to achieve the Millennium Goals. In that endeavour, we seek the commitment of our development partners in providing adequate finances to meet those goals. Even more important, I call upon the international community to enforce the Boundary Commission's decision on the Eritrea-Ethiopia border, if only because peace and stability have a crucial bearing on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I would like to offer condolences to the delegation of Eritrea, on my own behalf and on behalf of all delegations, on the loss of Mr. Ali Said Abdella, Foreign Minister of Eritrea.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to inform representatives that tomorrow we will have to enforce stricter discipline when it comes to the length of statements. We gained some leeway today since we worked through lunch and late into the evening — I am sure that some representatives will have missed other events. But tomorrow we have further business to do.

We will hear reports from the round tables, and the draft outcome document is to be adopted. We therefore need to stick to the five-minute limit. Perhaps those who are here today will spread the word to those who are not present that tomorrow we must work faster. Otherwise, we will have to sacrifice the whole of our lunch break tomorrow.

I would like to thank representatives for thei great patience and for having made this meeting suc an important one.

The meeting rose at 9 p.m.